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Studies in Deterrence

XIV. CHINESE POLITICAL AND CULTURAL THEMES
A Study of Chinese Communist Films

by

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ABSTRACT. This is a Project Michelson study report. The author analyzes 17 Chinese Communist dramatic films and compares them with traditional Chinese literature and drama and with Chinese films produced in Taiwan and Hong Kong. The dominant themes discussed are

1. The Feudalistic Family
2. Liberation of Women
3. Liberation of Youth
4. Reactionary Figures
5. Revolutionary Figures
6. Antiindividualism
7. Education and Training
8. Invaders
9. National Minorities

Emphasis on these themes is shown to be related to problems of [illegible]al conflict, communication, and authority within the Chinese culture.

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FOREWORD

In this study John Weakland, an anthropologist with a deep knowledge of Chinese culture, exploits the medium of dramatic films to identify some of the aspirations, attitudes, and problems of Communist China. Films, like books, are not composed by accident, and there are strong elements of political propaganda in the films analyzed here. Propaganda, although it may be intended to persuade or mislead a particular audience, can provide significant information if we learn to infer what problems or threats the propagandists are addressing and what techniques they are using in their efforts to influence. John Weakland provides his interpretation of these problems and techniques and their roots in traditional Chinese values, emotions, and imagery. The result is a contribution to our understanding of Chinese perceptions and reactions and an illustration of the potential of a valuable method of research.

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THOMAS W. MILBURN, Head
Behavioral Sciences Group
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SUMMARY

This study has examined 17 fictional films representing a varied sampling of Chinese Communist film output, plus related written review and commentary, to discern what political themes are propagated by this mass medium, and to consider what cultural themes, old or new, are related to the political messages. Such information is significant for better general understanding of political conceptions and attitudes of both Chinese Communist leaders and the general population; such background knowledge is needed to predict, or even to understand post facto, their interpretation of and response to more specific political messages—their own or ours, internally or internationally.

The propaganda messages in these films are not discrete, but are communicated by means of stories and characterizations constructed so as to present and promote an organized sociopolitical viewpoint. Overall, the group of films presents depictions of the evils of "Old China," struggles for revolutionary change, the virtues of "New China," and continuing social tasks and goals.

The main political themes observed in and abstracted from the concrete film images of social interaction included

1. The Feudalistic Family
2. Liberation of Women
3. Liberation of Youth
4. Reactionary Figures, Officials and Landlords
5. Revolutionary Figures
6. Antiindividualism
7. Education and Training
8. Invaders
9. National Minorities

These themes are so closely interrelated that separate evaluation is somewhat artificial, but antiindividualism appears especially important. This theme decries "individualistic" self-seeking behavior. It obviously is being used deliberately by the Chinese Communist leaders to promote active social effort and cooperation directed toward national ends they desire, but it does not appear as purely a deliberate device to get people to labor at imposed tasks. The theme also is clearly related to a perennial Chinese concern about obtaining unity and social cooperation, often stated by other, pre-Communist, leaders. Also, both the nature of this perennial problem and significant reasons why antiindividualism as a style of social relationship may have a real

appeal to Chinese, generally, are clarified by viewing this theme in connection with underlying cultural themes, also evident in the film material, concerning the relationship of men and women and the prevalence of indirect forms of communication in Chinese society.

Finally, antiindividualism and many other of the political and cultural themes in these films are recognizable as old Chinese themes, although their specific content, emphasis, or level of application may now be different.

INTRODUCTION

A "theme" is an explicit or implicit postulate about life inferred from cultural activities or products of a community. This research consisted of the study of a number of Chinese Communist feature motion pictures, with the aims of (1) identifying major political themes propagated in these films and (2) analyzing the dramatic images used to present these political messages. This was done in order to clarify the nature of each such political theme and the interrelations of such themes, and to bring out the nature of more basic sociocultural attitudes, values, and premises to which the political themes are related—since these underlying factors importantly influence Chinese understanding of and probable response not only to the political messages in the films, but to all conceivable political messages, including those of the United States. This is an unusual study, both in aims and means. Therefore it is especially important to state its general nature and significance at the outset before proceeding to describe its materials, methods, and findings in detail.

DETERRENCE, INFLUENCE, AND INTERPRETATION

Strategic deterrence involves using the existence and potential employment of the great force capabilities of the United States to inhibit undesired behavior by another nation. That is, deterrence is one form of influencing national behavior. Therefore, like all influence, deterrence depends critically not only on such force capabilities and the behavior of the influencing nations, but equally on how the nation to be influenced will note and respond to these factors. As a simple but fundamental example, it has been pointed out (Milburn, 1959) how our general policy of deterrence, based on atomic armaments, rests also on the extent to which our adversaries believe in our atomic capabilities, their estimates of our intentions as to the use of these weapons, and their own reactions to threats of destruction.

So much is evident. But it often seems much less evident that a nation's potential and actual responses are not just a matter of the "facts" and "logic" of situations, but a matter of how a nation —its population generally or its decision-makers in particular—interprets

these events and circumstances. Such interpretation is essential and inevitable. In the human social world, where men are both the actors and the objects of action, behavior and its outcomes are necessarily dependent on social facts, such as the conceptions and attitudes of both parties to any interaction. All people, whether logical or illogical—even the insane—necessarily behave in relation to that "reality" of the world they see through lenses shaped by their own social (and here, political) experience. A very important and fundamental part of this is acquired by rearing and social interaction within a particular national culture, which results in each case in the sharing of a distinctive total system of concepts, attitudes, and values concerning the nature of the world and the nature of individual and social life. Such a system affects the perception and evaluation of all matters of living, large and small; it underlies and shapes more limited or specialized subsystems, such as political conceptions. In any given case, some of its features are explicitly recognized by the members of the culture, and others can be acknowledged if pointed out; but always there are important basic premises which are so completely taken for granted that no native is aware of them.

For these inescapable reasons, in order to make any reliable predictions of a nation's probable responses to our deterrence operations, it is vital to gain an understanding of that nation's way of viewing and interpreting events and circumstances, especially in the political sphere. This does not at all mean that we should accept beliefs contrary to our own conceptions and aims. It means only that we should listen to and observe statements and actions, without bias or preconception, sufficiently to understand their own context and thus their own nature and significance; only then can we deal with others effectively and efficiently in relation to our own aims and values. Although it may be hard to do so, it is especially important to pay this kind of attention to our adversaries. After all, it is they who pose the greatest problems, challenges, and dangers to us; it is they we need most to deal with effectively and with minimal error.

The kind of understanding required is not so simple as it might seem to some, nor yet so impossible as it might seem to others—and for closely related reasons. It is just because each national culture involves its own system of belief and behavior that we cannot safely take Chinese Communist political statements at face value—that is, as we would naturally interpret them according to our system of conceptions—even when they seem plain, nor safely believe that actions speak for themselves. But by the same token, on examination of many such statements and actions in relation to one another, the nature of this system can progressively be more clearly discerned, and with knowledge of this context, particular statements and acts can be more accurately interpreted.

From what has been said above, it also follows that even where a country's international relations are the immediate focus of our concern, knowledge of its domestic political concepts and attitudes—

that is, the general bases and premises of its political life, explicit and implicit—is of central importance, for two reasons: (1) While inculcation and learning of concepts and attitudes may continue throughout life experience, and very significant developments occur even in adulthood (as in the learning of Communist dogma by the Chinese leaders and population), early learning, nevertheless, is the most general, and is a persisting base affecting all later learning. Therefore nations, like individuals, tend strongly to see the world "from the inside out"—that is, the Chinese view of international situations quite naturally largely involves a projection upon them of some framework related to experience of domestic political life, as this necessarily is earlier and more familiar. (2) In addition, a nation's actions, again like an individual's, to a large extent reflect or arise out of its internal organization and workings, in ways that may not be readily apparent, as well as reflecting external influences. We may too easily lose sight of these facts. Accordingly we may not only misinterpret the meaning of Communist China's national behavior that is significant to us by projecting our conceptions on it, we may also be misled either into viewing such Chinese political behavior as if it were occurring only in relation and opposition to the United States (or in an earlier period, as if Communist China were only a puppet of the Soviet Union), neglecting its internal sources and determinants; or, conversely, viewing Communist China's behavior in no way as a response to our national policies and actions. A general understanding of the domestic political system and situation of Mainland China is important for a clear view of Chinese international behavior on all these counts.

In a parallel way, knowledge of the more general Chinese Communist cultural system of conceptions, attitudes, and premises (and something of its relationship with traditional Chinese cultural patterns), as an earlier and more general context, is important for a clear view of domestic Chinese Communist politics. The structure of understanding proposed here is hierarchical. This may seem regrettably complex or even as if, in thus describing the existence and significance of progressively deeper and more general levels of concepts to be understood, we are moving away from our subject instead of fixing on it more firmly. But human thought and behavior itself is fundamentally hierarchical in organization (cf. Miller et al, 1960), and its understanding requires a similarly ordered investigation; oversimplification wastes more time and effort than appropriate complexity.

The kind of basic understanding described, moreover, is not limited to deterrence in significance, but is equally relevant for exertion of influence by any other means. This is important, since (1) force or the threat of force—although at times an essential prerequisite for using other forms of influence—itself has significant costs and limitations as a form of influence, and (2) it is worth considering how such a broader understanding might aid in positively influencing the People's Republic of China to act in directions we would approve. It is at least conceivable that some significant part of our conflicts with international adversaries

depends on misunderstandings and confused communications, rather than solely on irreconcilable difference and incompatibility between national goals. Certainly, a similar situation seems, from recent investigations, to exist importantly in other spheres involving bitter conflict previously attributed to different interests or goals—in particular, in industrial management-labor conflicts and marital conflicts. And international adversaries, historically, somehow often change into neutrals or even allies.

THE RELEVANCE OF FILMS

Fictional films—ordinary feature motion pictures—present valuable information on political and cultural systems precisely because they are not factual. Instead, they tell a story; that is, they present an interpretation of some segment of life by selection and ordering of images of behavior. As noted, it is just such interpretation and systematization that is of interest here, and a film, compared to daily life, already represents a higher ordering and a delimitation—a setting off of a culturally defined and organized unity whose internal content and pattern can then be studied. On this particular point we can even agree somewhat with Mao Tse-tung himself: "the creative forms of literature and art supersede nature in that they are more systematic, more concise, more typical, more idealized, and therefore more universal" (Mao, 1950, p. 25). At the same time that certain premises and relationships are thus pointed up more sharply than in life, in their use of concrete images, fictional films symbolically present basic cultural premises and attitudes which cannot be stated explicitly and literally because they exist below the level of awareness of the members of the culture, but which can be inferred from the film materials. Therefore, even when field observation, the generally preferred approach to anthropological work, is possible, as it is not for Communist China, film study has particular advantages in the study of large and complex modern societies.

Films from the People's Republic of China, moreover, offer a special combination of political and cultural material. The films, of course, are instruments of political indoctrination and propaganda. Chinese Communist statements explicitly emphasize the existence and importance of this nature and function of films:

> "We have called this meeting for the express purpose of making literature and art part of our revolutionary machinery, so that they may become a powerful weapon with which to unite and educate our people, to attack and destroy the enemy, and to help our people fight the enemy unitedly.... The revolutionary novel, play, and film can create all kinds of characters drawn from life to inspire the masses to push history forward" (Mao, 1950, pp. 8, 26).

> "The people's cinema is a key point in our work. A number of excellent feature films have been produced.... These films profoundly reflect various aspects of the Chinese people's struggle; they portray the lofty character of the new type of people's heroes, who have arisen out of the revolutionary struggles and the peaceful construction of China; they vividly champion the spirit of patriotism and internationalism" (Shen, 1952).

Thus the political content of these films—which may be quite explicit in films about present-day China, or a more subtle matter of orientation and emphasis in films based on traditional Chinese stories—can be considered as an official political statement designed for a mass Chinese audience, the films being primarily for internal Chinese consumption. The films, however, necessarily convey their authoritative political message in terms of dramatic images of Chinese life and social interaction, and mainly not by discrete details injected into otherwise neutral stories, but by stories constructed so as to convey and support an organized and comprehensive sociopolitical viewpoint. The films thus also must convey more general sociocultural themes along with and in close relation to their political themes. No matter how much these films are deliberately designed as propaganda (1) they are made by Chinese and planned to appeal to Chinese widely; (2) since any film is a highly complex product of a sizable group of people, much of its detailed content must be a resultant of social interaction rather than specific design; and (3) broad cultural views and attitudes of which the makers are unaware and thus cannot possibly control must also be reflected in the product they create.

Finally, films are, in several respects, superior for study to other fictional material, such as literary works, although these also are valuable, especially if used jointly with film data. (1) Films are generally apt to be more culturally representative—in the sense of projecting important cultural views, not of course as "reality"—than books because (a) they are a group rather than an individual product; (b) they are a mass medium of communication, aimed for a very wide and popular audience; they thus are likely to deal, relatively simply, with quite basic and general themes, not ones which are highly intellectual, specialized, or esoteric. (2) Yet, at the same time, films readily deal with widely varying content matter, so that it is possible from a group of films to see how general themes and particular kinds of social situations are interrelated. (3) Especially, only films provide verbal and visual material jointly, so that the student, in effect, has the opportunity to compare a description of political and cultural behavior in the dialogue with his own observation of the depiction of the behavior. This is highly important because the visual material is richer, and often less ambiguous, than the verbal, and because they can be compared; there may be highly revealing qualifications or inconsistencies between the two statements.

FILM STUDY, MATERIALS, AND APPROACH

Thematic analysis of feature fictional films, by anthropologists or other students under their influence, began in the United States during the period of World War II, in close association with efforts to analyze the cultures of large modern nations. Most of this pioneering work by Gregory Bateson and others—first at the Museum Art Film Library and later at the Library of Congress—was concerned with the films and culture of Japan and Germany as our major enemies in that war. (Bateson, 1943, 1945; Benedict, 1946; Kracauer, 1947; Meadow, 1944; Office of Strategic Services, 1944). However, interest in these two related areas—film analysis and modern cultures—persisted and even broadened after the war, most notably in Benedict and Mead's project, Columbia University Research in Contemporary Cultures (Mead and Metraux, 1953), which embodied or gave rise to several film studies of varying scope (Bel[illegible]953; Erikson, 1950; Gorer, 1953; Mead, 1953; Schwartz, 1953; Weakland,1953; Wolfenstein, 1953a, 1953b; Wolfenstein and Leites, 1950, 1954, 1955).

Since the conclusion of that project, however, there appears to have been little analysis of films done—there is one study of an American film by Haley (1953) and a study of themes in Indian film reviews by Honigmann and van Doorslaer (1955)—and correspondingly little broad anthropological analysis of contemporary national cultures generally. This situation seems peculiar and inappropriate, since analysis of films still appears especially suited to the study of modern societies, and it hardly seems that our practical and scientific needs for basic knowledge of other national cultures is less than it was 20 years ago.

FILM MATERIALS OF THIS STUDY

The study of Chinese Communist films at present involves many practical difficulties. It is rather difficult to view such films at all, especially in the United States. These films are under United States embargo, along with all other products of the People's Republic of China, and therefore can only enter this country if a special license is granted by the Treasury Department. It also seems that at present the government of Communist China is reluctant to have its films sent to the United States, even on a rental basis. These difficulties probably could be overcome, given ample time, effort, and funds; nevertheless, according to inquiries made of the Library of Congress, Harvard University, the Hoover Institution, and private individuals interested in film study, at present there are no fictional films from Communist China available for study in the United States. And, of course, Americans cannot now see them within China itself.

There remain, obviously, certain possiblities of seeing such films in other countries neutral or friendly to the People's Republic of China, where they may be shown as cinema art at film festivals, as interesting rarities or curiosities, or because of the existence of some political alliance or an overseas Chinese population. A variety of problems are associated with these possiblities also, of which several are ubiquitous and important. Since film showing under these circumstances is always somewhat special and limited in extent, to see a reasonable number of films requires either very extensive travel, prolonged residence abroad, or some compromise between these. (For example, there are probably more Communist Chinese movies shown commercially in Hong Kong than anywhere else, except perhaps Indonesia, but in 6 months' residence there by the author, only about six such films appeared). Even then there may be important limitations on what can be viewed, for various reasons--there may be censorship of manifestly political films in one place, whereas only such films are shown in a second, and only the most "artistic" productions in a third.

Such factors prevent any study of Chinese films from being ideal, especially according to the sort of scientific viewpoint in which one style of methodological rigor is elevated above all other considerations. However, perhaps because ideal and fully controllable conditions never exist in field work, anthropologists (like clinicians or men of affairs) are accustomed to working as well as may be with the information and circumstances that exist, in the belief that if there is an important matter at hand it is better, both scientifically and practically, to gain partial but basic knowledge of it than to gain none at all by insistence on impossible conditions.

This research, then, is based on 17 films seen in Hong Kong and Canada between 1962 and 1964. The first of many complexities in the study of Chinese Communist film materials lies in the accurate identification of such motion pictures and the ascription of their production to Chinese Communist sources. This problem exists to a limited extent even for films produced in Mainland China by government-controlled studios, since these films often carry among their credit titles only the name of the particular producing studio, from which their origin, politically speaking, may not be self-evident, and at worst these titles may lack explicit mention of any Mainland China organization and refer only to some Hong Kong film production or distribution company.

The problem is considerably more serious for a second class of films, those made by Hong Kong producers who are to an important extent controlled by, supported by, or in agreement with the government of the People's Republic of China. Yet films of this class, though of course always subordinate to films actually made in China under direct government control, should be included in a study of this kind, if possible. They help to increase the numerical size of the film sample for study, but more importantly they increase the range of stories and settings within which the Communist political themes are

portrayed. Mainland China films today largely fall within two groups. Those seen in commercial theaters in Hong Kong, which censor films from either Mainland China or Taiwan that are too overtly propagandistic, largely consist of costume dramas or romances (both usually in opera form) set in ancient China; those seen in Canada largely consist of dramas of the establishment and development of the New China, which range from guerilla warfare to the building of reservoirs. Against a background of some acquaintance with these films, it can be very useful also to view the Communist-influenced motion picture about young love and marriage in a present-day Hong Kong business setting; the political themes are further illuminated, and especially their wider social implications are conveyed to us more readily, by this depiction in a relatively familar kind of social setting. Moreover, for a given numerical size of sample, the wider the range of subject, style, and producer covered by the films viewed, the greater the likelihood that any themes found significant across the varied sample will also be significant for other films and for Chinese Communism generally.

Eventually, utilizing on the one hand information in film titles, programs, and advertisements, plus Chinese film periodicals, and on the other, information concerning the political affiliations or viewpoints of various Hong Kong film producing or distributing organizations (gathered in Hong Kong with help from the United States Information Service and the Union Research Institute), it has been possible to identify films reliably in most instances.

Of the 17 films, 11 were direct People's Republic of China productions and 6 were by Communist producers in Hong Kong. These films dated from 1956 to 1962, and covered a wide range. Seven different studios were represented. In terms of style there were five adaptations of traditional Chinese opera, a fantasy, a review, eight realistic dramas, and two comedies. The setting portrayed varied from ancient China (7 films) and late traditional China (1) to the 1930s (2) and present-day China (3) and Hong Kong (4). A number of ordinary Hong Kong productions and two Taiwan films were viewed for comparison. A list of these films, together with a summary of identifying data, is given in Table 1.

Thematic analysis of films may vary from extremely intensive study of a single film (cf. Bateson, 1945) which requires many repeated viewings, to a less intensive single viewing of a large number of films. This project fell in midrange. About half the films studied were viewed only once, at ordinary commercial showings (or for a few Hong Kong films, on television). A few films were seen twice at such showings. The remaining films were screened only once, but privately, so that during screening they were often halted and scenes of particular interest were rerun. Here again the practical circumstances of this study necessarily influenced its procedures. It would have been desirable to see these films more often, and especially to have them available for re-viewing as the work of analysis proceeded. Yet given prior experience with film materials and the extent of repetition

TABLE 1. FILMS EXAMINED

Title	Production data			Setting		Content
	Studio	Date	Style	Time	Locale	
Mainland China						
Old China						
Hua Mu Lan	Chang Chun	1956	Historical drama	Ancient	China	Heroic woman warrior replaces old father, defeats barbarian invaders
Women Generals of the Yang Family	Shanghai[a] (probably)	1961	Operatic drama	Ancient	China	Yang women and youth replace fallen male head of family, defeat barbarian invaders
Liang Shan-po and Chu Ying-tai	Shanghai	1954	Operatic romance	Ancient	China	Young woman attends school in male disguise, but family thwarts her romance
The Scholar and the Fairy Carp	Shanghai	1953	Fantasy	Ancient	China	Poor scholar is denied daughter of official family, but finds love with her double, a fairy who becomes human
Dream of the Red Chamber	Shanghai	1962	Operatic romance	17th century	China	Young lovers (rebellious son and orphaned cousin) kept apart by wealth and power-oriented family
The Jade Hairpin	Shanghai	1962	Operatic romance	Ancient	China	Young scholar avoids wife he believes unfaithful because of jealous rival's plot; semi-comic
Yang Nai-wu and Haiao Pai-tsai	Kin Sheng Co., Distributor	1962	Drama	19th century	China	Poor young wife oppressed by evil official; raped, accused of murder
New China						
Song of Youth	Peking	1959	Realistic drama	1930s	North China	Girl rescued from oppression joins students' anti-Japanese and anti-Kuomintang struggles
Singing Above the Reservoir	Chang Chun	1958	Realistic drama	Current	North China	Young couple works together to help build reservoir
Cool Mountain's Bright Pearl (Te Chieh and Her Fathers)	Omei and Chang Chun	1961	Realistic drama	Current	West China	Young girl raised by Yi tribe foster-father finds real father
Blossoms in the Sun	Peking	1962	Revue	Current	North China	Children organize a show to celebrate "International Children's Night"

TABLE 1. (CONTD.)

Title	Production data			Setting		Content
	Studio	Date	Style	Time	Locale	
Hong Kong--Communist Influenced						
Old China						
So Siu-siu	Sin Lien	1962	Drama	Ancient	East China	Young lovers (singing girl and high official's son) oppressed and separated by official and family pressures
New China						
Return of the Prodigal Youth	Phoenix	1957	Realistic drama	Current	Hong Kong	Overly ambitious young man goes wrong in love and business by pursuit of success
The Precious Little Moon	Phoenix	1959	Realistic drama	Current	Hong Kong	Ambitious girl student's relations with social-minded young man
The Perfect Match	Phoenix	1960	Comedy	Current	Hong Kong	Satirical picture of conflicts of mismatched pair of individuals
As You Wish	Great Wall	1958	Comedy	Current	Hong Kong	Ambitious wife causes havoc trying to push husband's advancement, currying favor with boss's family
Between Vengeance and Love	Great Wall	1961	Realistic drama	1930s	Manchuria	Young lovers involved in family conflicts; girl's father an evil landlord
Taiwan						
Old China						
Lady General Red Jade	Sing Kwong	1962	Operatic drama	Ancient	North China	Singing girl becomes woman warrior, marries general; whole family fights barbarians
No Greater Love	Taiwan	1962	Realistic drama	17th century	Taiwan	Chinese official civilizes aborigines through devotion and sacrifice
Hong Kong--Non-Communist						
Old China						
Hua Mu Lan	Shaw	1962 (?)	Historical drama	Ancient	China	Heroic woman warrior replaces old father; defeats barbarian invaders
Liang Shan-po and Chu Ying-tai	Shaw	1962	Operatic romance	Ancient	China	Young woman attends school in male disguise, but family thwarts her romance

[a] The Shanghai Film Producing Company includes three studios, which at times have operated largely as separate units.

and systematic interconnection of thematic material within the group of films, the amount of viewing that was feasible (supplemented by the auxiliary sources of information to be described) was adequate to the aim of this study, namely, discerning and describing the nature and relationships of the main political and cultural themes characteristic of these films taken as a group.

DATA COLLECTING AND RECORDING

The films themselves, of course, constitute the original data of study. The second level of data consists of extensive notes taken on the films during viewing in accordance with previous experience of film study. These notes included information of the following kinds: (1) Identifying data on the film and its makers. (2) The characters, setting, and general type of the film. (3) A record of the content, development, and structure of the story involved for each film, as nearly scene-by-scene as possible. (4) As much other significant detail—including visual, aural, and technical aspects of the production—as could be noted and recorded, with special attention to (a) repetitive features within a film or between films, (b) unusual or striking images or abrupt changes, and (c) any apparent incongruence between words and actions. All films were viewed in company with at least one native-born Chinese informant and at times with other informants also. This provided a basis for review, inquiry, and discussion of every film and related aspects of Chinese culture shortly after viewing. It also aided in following the verbal material (usually dialogue in Mandarin, sometimes supplemented by subtitles in Chinese, English, or both) while the author paid special attention to the visual material, which in ordinary film-going is seen but not observed critically and in detail. Ordinarily a 5- to 20-page writeup was made on each film within a day after it was seen, drawing on the original notes, memory, the discussions, and theater programs—for Chinese films, these customarily provide identifying data, a synopsis of the story, or, occasionally, even the full dialogue, and often other descriptive material. These writeups constituted the main working data of the research.

In addition, however, a considerable amount of supplementary data were subsequently gathered and translated from Chinese Communist publications, including books, film magazines and periodicals of general comment, and newspapers. Most of this material was obtained by searching the collections of the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, but other material was obtained by use of the services of the Union Research Institute and the United States Information Service in Hong Kong, and through commercial sources such as Chinese book dealers and subscriptions to film periodicals. Three kinds of material have been of particular interest. First, there are additional direct data on the films viewed in this study. Some of this is further data of identification, but more important is content data; by reference to film books and periodicals as well as programs it has been possible to collect complete screenplay texts for about a third of the films viewed. Also, a general idea of the content of several major films

which could not be viewed as such is available via illustrated booklets on these films or books giving the text of a stage version. Second, there are film reviews and commentaries which provide authoritative Chinese Communist statements as to their political content and intended message. Such comment is supplemented and put in context, third, by more general Chinese Communist materials on their political aims and ideas, especially writings on the political significance of films generally, as a subdivision of art and literature.

FILM ANALYSIS–GENERAL APPROACH AND PROBLEMS

Analysis of films for their thematic content is generally unfamiliar, even among social scientists, and may for this reason tend to be regarded as more a matter of art or even guesswork than of science. This is incorrect, as thematic film analysis in concept rests on accepted and statable scientific principles, and in practice involves a method which may be taught and learned reasonably readily and reliably. There are, however, certain important obstacles to making its scientific nature and procedures clear and convincing by verbal description alone, especially in any brief form. These difficulties are closely related to the nature of the film material. On the one hand, films–similar to life itself–constitute data of such richness that almost no analysis can be exhaustive; other aspects or levels always remain for examination, and thus different analysts might validly describe different themes for the same film or group of films. On the other hand, despite their richness and complexity, films are organized and ordered in a high degree; they contain a great deal of observable repetition of elements and of interrelations between such elements. Both of these matters, though, depend very much on visual as well as verbal film material, and, moreover, our general lack of analytic film-viewing experience is compounded by much experience of seeing films habitually in an opposed way; it is therefore difficult without recourse to actual guided viewing of film materials to convey how much they contain or how readily and clearly important themes and relationships can be discerned once attention is focused toward them. In view of these basic difficulties, we will here only refer to some relevant discussions of film analysis and related similar work and mention a few basic principles in brief outline, then rely on the body of this report to convey its approach and methods more fully and concretely, by illustration and example, at the same time its substantive content is being set forth.

Film analysis fundamentally is only a special case of anthropological study of cultural themes and patterns. Principles of such study have been described simply but vividly by Benedict (1946, pp. 6-11) and at length and more generally by Weakland (1951). More specifically the nature of film analysis is clarified, by discussion or by example, in all the prior film studies cited above; it is most explicitly and extensively examined by Wolfenstein (1953a).

The premises and principles of thematic analysis of films are quite simple, although the amount of information and its repeated and careful examination should at least make it clear that, however else such analysis may be labeled, it is far from impressionistic. The central premise of this kind of study is that any film, or groups of films from one source, like a sociocultural system, constitutes an organized whole, a pattern made up of recurrent thematic elements interrelated in characteristic, recurrent ways. Such recurrent themes and relationships—which may be of various levels of generality—may be progressively discerned by close but unbiased viewing of the data. This examination at first focuses simply on what does visibly recur. Observed recurrences may then be related to more general ideas of various kinds—of political aims, of cultural background, of psychological concepts. From such, at first tentative, connections the analyst returns to the task of observation again. In addition to simple recurrence, this gradually also focuses on comparisons of recurrent elements as occuring in different concrete images. This further clarifies what is characteristic for any given theme, and leads to groupings into more general themes and subgrouping of more limited and specific themes. Such interrelationships based mainly on similarity are later augmented by following up observations of differences, especially apparent contradictions or striking exceptions to what seems usual; close attention to such points leads toward discerning how exceptions fit in as definable and related special cases, or how some, more basic, premise underlies and connects apparent contradictions. Thus, gradually, an increasingly extensive and systematic picture of the overall pattern and its elements is built up by repeated alternation of detailed observation, comparison, and more general characterization.

For these particular films, thematic analysis may best begin with the discrimination of certain "manifest political themes," both because these are of most specific interest for the purposes of the study, and because this material is relatively simple to recognize and characterize. Particularly in the films dealing explicitly with present-day China and the Communist revolution, even though these themes are woven into the total plot structure, they may be rather evident, given a general acquaintance with Chinese Communist political ideology and discourse. This is especially true in work with a group of films, since a close observer rapidly becomes aware of the repetition of various thematic elements, despite varying specific story content, on viewing several films. Furthermore, the review and commentary materials mentioned explicitly point out various important political themes in these films specifically, or in Chinese films in general. Such identification cannot be taken as final, because some themes are not thus pointed out in the materials examined, either from limitations of the sources available or limitations of interest or awareness on the part of the Chinese Communist critics themselves, and, similarly, themes which are pointed out may be, from our standpoint, inaccurately or incompletely described. Nevertheless, these pointings-out are of considerable value as a beginning, especially for aid in identifying the

political themes which are not obvious, and for establishing a preliminary division or classification of such themes.

These two points relate to problems that are so important and ubiquitous in the study of political material in films that further discussion is in order for both. First, certain political themes of great importance may not be evident, even though they are fairly openly conveyed in film content, because we would not automatically recognize their existence, or their nature, as political. The former situation is especially apt to occur in films which consist of new dramatizations of traditional novels or operas; in such films, the political messages are a matter of interpretations placed on the traditional stories, perhaps aided by selective emphases or quantitatively minor but structurally important changes in plot, character, or motivation. For example, in the famous Chinese novel Dream of the Red Chamber, the hero, Pao-yu, dislikes and tries to avoid the classical Chinese studies which lead to the official career which his wealthy family thinks he should pursue, yet he eventually gives in and passes the imperial examinations to "fulfill his worldly obligations"; then he disappears from the world. In the Communist film version, Pao-yu, as a more revolutionary figure, abandons the family as not only worldly, but corrupt, and disappears without taking the examinations. Or, more generally and more importantly, we as Americans and Westerners may fail to conceive of certain themes as being political which are very basically so for Chinese society—the general theme of social cohesion, to be discussed at length later, is an outstanding example. That is, in a study of this sort—an initial exploration of material that is foreign as well as fictional—there is a serious danger, reinforced by the influence and prestige of certain specialized images of the nature of science, of setting up some tight and narrow system of criteria derived from other contexts of experience, predefining what should be looked for as politically significant. Such standards may easily be misdirected or too restrictive before there is an opportunity by freer examination of the data to discover what these films themselves present as politically and socially significant. Therefore it appears that initially only certain broad guidelines should be specified, and that any recurrent set of related observable elements appearing in the manifest content of any film should be accepted as a manifest political theme, at least provisionally, if it fits within any of the following criteria:

1. Anything labeled as a political message in official or semi-official Chinese Communist comments on a film.

2. Anything in the film material which is clearly similar to a theme occurring in directly political Chinese Communist material—laws, manifestos, analyses or statements of doctrine by Mao or other leaders, and so forth—even if its content or usage in a film does not immediately appear political in nature.

3. Any theme which is emphasized in a clearly political context within a film—where the film content has to do with the government, with officials, political parties, and so on—even if some of these themes in themselves do not immediately seem politically relevant to us.

4. Any theme isolated by criterion 3 must still be attended to if and when it appears in another context which is not immediately evident as being political in nature.

At a later stage, when a basic view of these kinds of films has been developed, it can be appropriate to approach these or similar materials again with an aim of investigating what they convey about various selected and defined topics of specific political interest to us; these possibilities will be discussed subsequently.

In addition to this problem of definitions or criteria, the listing of manifest political themes in the films also involves special problems of abstraction and classification. Political themes are presented in the films in terms of a variety of concrete dramatic images—not fixed, set off, and pointed out like political slogans. Therefore themes must be abstracted, delimited, and labeled, starting with material in which the themes (1) are highly interrelated and connected; (2) appear in terms of different content, with different degrees of development, and with different emphasis on their component aspects; and (3) may be viewed and labeled in alternative ways, according to the stance from which the material is considered. For example, a story line about the struggle of a young woman against parental control might be labeled as an example of the Feudalistic Family or as the Liberation of Women theme, according to viewpoint and emphasis.

It is just these features that make the study of films so valuable, since they lead toward an understanding of larger wholes—of the interconnections of various political themes, and beyond that their interconnections with the broader cultural context—but there are corresponding difficulties in the necessary initial work of analysis and exposition of major political themes. The boundaries of any theme, the level of generality or detail with which its features are specified, and the appropriate label for reference, are not fully manifest, but are matters of judgment and decision by the analytic observer.

After a set of manifest political themes has been developed and described, taking the above considerations into account, there is needed further study of the concrete, dramatized images of social interaction used to embody the political themes, especially of what images are recurrent, their interconnections, and apparent contradictions between themes, in the light of existing knowledge of traditional patterns of Chinese culture. With an appropriate angle and level of generality of viewing, this progressively leads to discerning underlying and less conscious cultural themes in the films, and interrelations between these two thematic levels; that is, how the various political themes appear to parallel, to emphasize, or to alter—modifying or even reversing—older and more pervasive culture themes.

As noted earlier, the film material, which is extremely rich, could equally appropriately be analyzed from other angles or at different levels. Even from its own viewpoint, this study of Chinese Communist films is necessarily incomplete both extensively and intensively; the film sample is not large and not fully studied. Yet on the basis of the repetition and system exhibited, despite the diversity of this sample, it seems probable that the results of additional similar study would supplement the present results, but would not contradict the picture developed here or shift its emphasis substantially.

It would, of course, also be possible to make an alternative analysis which would view the political themes in these films, not against the Chinese cultural background, but in comparison with Soviet Communist ideology. The choice made here was based on the author's own interest in Chinese culture, the probable significance of this context, and the relative neglect of detailed and systematic study of Chinese Communism in relation to Chinese culture.

MANIFEST POLITICAL THEMES

In listing, describing, and analyzing the manifest political themes in the sample of films studied, the following points need consideration:

1. What themes are presented, and secondarily, which receive most emphasis?
2. What is the characteristic general content of each theme—its main subject and message—and what kinds of images are used to present this?
3. How are the various themes interrelated?

In addition, since the films and this study are concerned with revolutionary social change, it is necessary to consider temporal and developmental imagery in the films, although these might be negligible for studies of films related to a more stable, ongoing sociocultural situation. In fact, the film themes, and particularly their broader interrelations, can be seen most clearly by first noting that the particular themes appear within a single framework, visible on viewing the entire group of films together, despite their wide variety. This framework is, essentially, a projected image of stages in the historical development of the Chinese Revolution:

1. The Old Chinese Society and Its Evils (including dramatic or satirical pictures of present-day but capitalist Hong Kong)
2. Transitional Struggles for Social Change
3. The New Chinese Society and Its Virtues
4. Continuing Tasks and Future Goals

Any given film deals with one or more of these aspects of the Chinese Revolution in its setting and its thematic emphasis, although these may not be the same. That is, a film set in Old China may emphasize early struggles for change, as Liang Shan-po and Chu Ying-tai, adapted from a familiar story of ancient China, depicts a girl who wants equal rights with men for an education, or as Never Forget, a film of China today, warns against backsliding into the evil "individualism" of the past.

In listing particular political themes, the problems of discrimination and decision come into specific focus. On the one hand, there is observation and reflection on the film material itself to see what politically relevant images are recurrent and emphasized; on the other, consideration of specific Chinese Communist comment on the nature and content of such films to see what political aspects they single out and what labels they apply. Close adherence to Chinese characterizations in defining themes has the advantages of making clear initially some of the official and cultural interpretation of such films, and relationships between the film images and general Chinese Communist political dogma. However, such direct characterization is not available for all important aspects of the films as mentioned; but they should not on that account be ignored. Also, the comment on themes that is available, although it exhibits considerable coherence and order in terms of the standard framework of Chinese Communist political analysis, nevertheless is less than maximally systematic for the total film material because of certain variations in level of generality, overlaps, and blind spots in the standard Chinese viewing.

In any case, a list of themes must be provisional rather than complete and final. It is a framework for ordering observations, derived from material under study, and therefore is always subject to the problems inherent in this material, as described, and also to possible revisions which might arise from further information or new viewpoints consequent upon the collection of new data—either commentary or additional films—from new observations in the existing data, or from the development of new directions of interest in the investigation.

The choice made here is to begin with a number of political themes as identified by the Chinese Communists, either specifically mentioned in their comments on films or mentioned in other discussion but evidently applicable to these film materials as well. Such themes have been denoted by the use of quotation marks for their titles when first listed. They are supplemented by a number of other themes, of roughly similar level, which are based on the author's own observations and characterization. These are not given quotation marks; however, it should be kept in mind that explicit categorization and labeling similar to that given here might exist in still unexamined Chinese Communist materials. Most, but not all, of these thematic categories are dualistic in nature, involving a negative image for the bad, Old China and an obverse, positive image for the good, New China, but this is often not explicit in their labels. For instance, the material

referred to under "Liberation of Women" deals both with past oppression and present liberation. As fits the sources, Chinese Communist terminology and phrasing, with or without quotation marks, will be used considerably in describing these themes. This terminology is not fully systematic concerning the themes and their interrelations, and, of course, Communist phrasings have much inherent bias. But later discussion will make clear where the analytical view of this research adds to or departs from the implications of the Communist categorization and phrasing; to see the film themes broadly and clearly at last, it is necessary to see them largely in their own terms and contexts at first:

1. "The Feudalistic Family": Images of the nature and evils of the family system in China before the Communist revolution.
2. "Liberation of Women": Release of women from inequality and male oppression, and raising them to equality with men in the new Chinese society.
3. "Liberation of Youth": Similar to the preceding, but for the case of age and generation rather than sex differences.
4. Reactionary Figures, Officials and Landlords: Powerful elements of the Old China and how they oppressed the common people of town and country.
5. Revolutionary Figures, Past and Present ("People's Heroes"): Models of character and behavior, according to the Chinese Communists, from ancient times until the present.
6. "Antiindividualism": Images of the nature and importance of social cooperation in Chinese society, and threats and dangers to it by "individualism."
7. Education and Training: New aims and standards contrasted with traditional practice.
8. Invaders: Chinese dealings with external enemies.
9. "National Minorities": Chinese relations with internal minority groups, past and present.
10. Allies: (It should be noted that, starting with the Korean Conflict, occasional fictional films and a number of documentaries have been directed to this theme, although none are included in the sample viewed.)

These political themes may now be examined in some detail to clarify their nature and to lay a foundation for subsequent consideration of their interrelations and relative significance.

THE FEUDALISTIC FAMILY

The overt reference of this Chinese Communist label is to their view of one feature of traditional Chinese society, the extended family of several generations and several branches living together in one household. The usual image of such a family presented by Chinese, and even Western, accounts of Chinese society until recently, was that such families were typical, and that they were highly integrated, harmonious units that persisted over very long periods—hundreds of years or more. It is now known that this image, in almost all respects, represents a traditional Chinese aim or ideal, but not a reality (Hsu, 1943; Hu, 1960, pp. 158, 163; Lin, 1947); such households existed only for wealthy families. The usual family in China consisted of perhaps half a dozen people of two or three generations; the big families that did exist involved a considerable amount of conflict and submission of individual members to family control, and were often not permanent, but formed and broke up in accordance with changes in their fortunes and relationships.

The picture of the Feudalistic Family presented in the films contains, like much Chinese Communist characterization, elements of the old myth, of the reality, and of particular Chinese Communist viewing. That is, it is the extended family which is shown, some of its real conflicts and difficulties are displayed, and there is special selection and emphasis in presenting and explaining its faults and evils. This is a significant theme in almost every film in the sample depicting Old China, and often a central one. It even appears prominently in a seriocomic film with a modern Hong Kong setting (As You Wish).

The Feudalistic Family is depicted as a self-contained entity which is allied with similar families and with the official and landlord classes generally (Dream of the Red Chamber, Yang Nai-wu and Hsiao Pai-tsai, Liang Shan-po and Chu Ying-tai), but is otherwise unconcerned with outsiders except to oppress or exploit them (Yang Nai-wu and Hsiao Pai-tsai, Dream of the Red Chamber). Yet at the same time, relations within the family are full of conflicts, maneuvering, flattery, and insincerity; this is essentially manifest in the film version of Dream of the Red Chamber—and also in the original novel.

The Feudalistic Family is shown as oppressive of the young. Their freedom to learn, to work, and to serve their country is shown as restricted for selfish family reasons of material gain or social status. In Dream of the Red Chamber, the family tries to confine Pao-yu to the study of the Chinese Classics—characterized as impractical and lifeless—so that he will become an official and help maintain their position. In Liang Shan-po and Chu Ying-tai, her parents attempt to prevent Chu Ying-tai from going to school because education was considered improper for girls, although she succeeds by the ruse of disguising herself in male dress so well that they don't recognize her. Similarly, Hua Mu Lan, in the film of the same name, is restrained by the family when she wishes to defend her country, but she also

succeeds by a ruse involving male disguise (which itself seems a significant theme, at another level, in Chinese films).

Most of all, though, the Feudalistic Family is shown as restricting the freedom of the young in romance and marriage; Chu Ying-tai is able to overcome her parents' opposition to her education, but she can not overcome their ambitious plans for her marriage to an official's son, except at a level of fantasied reunion with her true love after their deaths. Thus families are shown (though this overt emphasis is not the whole story, as will be noted later) as restricting freedom in love, both by breaking up love matches and by enforcing undesired arranged marriages by duress (Yang Nai-wu and Hsiao Pai-tsai, So Siu-siu, Between Vengeance and Love, Song of Youth), or by deception—as in the famous scene in Dream of the Red Chamber in which Pao-yu lifts his bride's veil to discover not his sweetheart, as he has been told, but the girl chosen and substituted for her by his family.

In contrast to the Feudalistic Family, there is the family in New China, depicted in some films but less emphasized. This is opposite to the Feudalistic Family in many, but not all, respects. Characteristically a small family is shown, even to the point of incompleteness: father, son, and son's betrothed in Singing Above the Reservoir; father, daughter, and foster-father in Cool Mountain's Bright Pearl. The people in these groups characteristically do have some family problems—how to find time to get married in Singing Above the Reservoir, the relations of real father and foster-father to the girl in Cool Mountain's Bright Pearl. But these are problems, not conflicts between persons, and they are neatly resolved with the intervention and aid of the larger social group and government or Party officials so that everyone is happy and productive. In fact, the family members largely are shown as involved in extrafamilial tasks in relation to the larger society, and working to a considerable extent not only in equal but in similar, parallel jobs. For the new family there are no longer the struggles of young people over love and emotional intimacy seen in the Feudalistic Family. There is very little such intimacy to struggle over; it seems to be avoided by all concerned in the common focus on working together—or more accurately, alongside each other. The hero and heroine do get married in Singing Above the Reservoir—on the work site, at the Spring Festival holiday, only to emerge from their wedding place, the construction headquarters tent, to go off to their different jobs on the night shift.

LIBERATION OF WOMEN

This theme is very prominent in the films and is often referred to specifically in Chinese Communist comment, although it is highly entwined with, and in a sense even subsidiary to, the Feudalistic Family theme.

On the negative side—that is, oppression or domination of women in the old society—we may first note the existence of certain exceptions. Older women do not appear as oppressed; on the contrary, they are apt to be quite powerful: the old matriarchs in Dream of the Red Chamber and Women Generals of the Yang Family, the mistress of a house of singsong girls in So Siu-siu, even the wife of a Hong Kong businessman in The Perfect Match. Also, even some young women are presented as not only forceful in character but effective in its assertion—especially women as warriors in Hua Mu Lan and Women Generals of the Yang Family, or even Chu Ying-tai so far as her education is concerned, and before the question of romance arises.

Nevertheless, the main picture presented for women in the old society is one of oppression. In some instances this is of wives by husbands. Rather mild examples involve Pao-yu's mother in Dream of the Red Chamber and the heroine in Song of Youth; while Hsiao Pai-tsai (Yang Nai-wu and Hsiao Pai-tsai) and the landlord's wife in Between Vengeance and Love suffer more from their husbands, even to some physical violence. But the surprisingly dominant image is one of sexual oppression and exploitation of young women, often by utilizing the power of wealth, official position, or the family system to do so. Several variants of this appear. The matter of family breakup of romantic attachments and enforcing arranged marriages has been mentioned already; fathers, mothers, or other older women may all be parties to this. In addition, there is attempted or actual seduction (So Siu-siu, The Jade Hairpin) and rape (Between Vengeance and Love, Yang Nai-wu and Hsiao Pai-tsai), with money and power used for duress or to thwart any retaliation. (This is also a central element in The White-Haired Girl, probably the most famous Chinese Communist drama, both on the stage and on the screen.) It is also notable that girls may suffer sexual oppression either by their families, especially via enforced marriages or, alternatively, because they have no families to protect them; orphan heroines are frequent (Lin Tai-yu in Dream of the Red Chamber, Lin Tao-ching in Song of Youth, So Sui-sui, Hsiao Pai-tsai). Or, combining these apparent opposites, an orphan may be oppressed by those who have adopted her.

The liberated woman, in contrast, is free of family control and male oppression to a large degree, or even surpasses men. This is true in part for some pre-Communist heroines. Chu Ying-tai is able to leave home temporarily and go off to school, where she is very successful in a male world. Hua Mu Lan and the Yang women are even more successful in the army. And Lin Tao-ching, the heroine in Song of Youth—a story of transition from Kuomintang to Communist power—leaves first her foster-mother and then the "reactionary" husband she had married, to work effectively in the Party. This kind of shift is still more evident for the films of New China, in which the heroines have some family ties shown, without family control, but are not therefore on their own. Rather, they are closely involved with wider social groups—the Party, cooperatives, communes—and the leaders of such

groups are very influential in making arrangements for their education and for their working at tasks like the men's (Cool Mountain's Bright Pearl), and even for their marriage (Singing Above the Reservoir); yet these relationships are portrayed as helping, not controlling, and do not involve much interpersonal intimacy.

LIBERATION OF YOUTH

In these films there seems generally to be less attention to youth as such, or to young men, than to young women. The heroines often are striking figures, but the heroes seem less vivid and less important, as well-intentioned and handsome, but rather quiet, reserved young men, somewhat passive or even weak or slow-witted compared to their counterparts; this impression, however, may involve a bias in Western viewing of the male roles, and should be checked further with Chinese viewers.

For Old China, there is some general emphasis on the power of elders and the practical helplessness of the young to do other than conform to established social standards. For the young men, one important aspect of this is the necessity of devoting themselves to classical studies (Dream of the Red Chamber) and to maintaining proper dependent relationships with those who can advance their official (Dream of the Red Chamber, The Scholar and the Fairy Carp) or academic (Song of Youth) careers. The Hong Kong films emphasize the dependence of young employees, and their wives, on the boss's favors (As You Wish, Return of the Prodigal Youth, The Perfect Match).

Even for young men, though, the matter of oppressive control of sexual relationships is depicted as a central issue, primarily in terms of the breaking up of romantic matches and the enforcement of arranged marriages that are undesired (Dream of the Red Chamber, Liang Shan-po and Chu Ying-tai, The Scholar and the Fairy Carp, Yang Nai-wu and Hsiao Pai-tsai, The Jade Hairpin, Return of the Prodigal Youth.)

In the New China, the picture for young men is much like that already described for liberated women: some family ties but not much family contact or control; instead, a major focus on participation in wider social groups engaged in productive tasks, with social relationships and even marriage ordered in relation to these tasks, and with guidance and help in arranging all these matters provided by officials and Party members (Song of Youth, Singing Above the Reservoir).

In several pictures (Song of Youth, Women Generals of the Yang Family, Blossoms in the Sun) which emphasize the participation of children or adolescents in adult kinds of social tasks, the young members are shown as still receiving considerable support or supervision from adult leaders.

REACTIONARY FIGURES, OFFICIALS AND LANDLORDS

Depictions of such figures, of course, are confined to pictures of Old China or the transitional period, except for one flashback in Cool Mountain's Bright Pearl, since, supposedly, landlords have now been abolished as a class and the old officials replaced by, or transformed into, a new breed of benevolent official. There are also interesting depictions of somewhat related figures of capitalists in several Hong Kong pictures, but these will not be considered in any detail here.

Landlords and officials appear as closely interrelated, and as closely tied to the Feudalistic Family system, which is factually accurate. Landlords, however, appear relatively infrequently in the sample of films (only in Song of Youth, Between Vengeance and Love, and Cool Mountain's Bright Pearl) and are always villainous, whereas the more numerous officials include a few that are honest and upright, although most of the officials shown join in with the landlords in oppressing the young and the common people of town and countryside.

This oppression takes several forms. There is physical violence and brutality (Song of Youth, Yang Nai-wu and Hsiao Pai-tsai, Cool Mountain's Bright Pearl, Between Vengeance and Love); there is relentless driving of people into poverty (Song of Youth, Between Vengeance and Love); and there is official corruption, bribery, and subversion of justice (Song of Youth, Yang Nai-wu and Hsiao Pai-tsai, So Siu-siu). But once again sexual oppression by these people of wealth and power is a dominant theme. In one form or another, it appears in half of the films in the sample. Enforced marriage or prevention of desired marriages for reasons of wealth or position occurs in Liang Shan-po and Chu Ying-tai, Dream of the Red Chamber, So Siu-siu, and The Scholar and the Fairy Carp, even though this last is somewhat humorous fantasy. Even in Hua Mu Lan, the warrior heroine, a very dominant figure, encounters a considerable problem when her commanding general, accepting her male disguise, presses her to marry his daughter. Attempted seduction under duress of official position and power appears in Song of Youth and So Siu-siu. Rape by a member of an official family occurs in Yang Nai-wu and Hsiao Pai-tsai, and by a landlord in Between Vengeance and Love.

Moreover, even much of the other kinds of oppression by officials and landlords occurs in close relationship with sexual oppression, as antecedent circumstances—people are made so poor or helpless they cannot avoid enforced marriage, seduction, or violent rape—or as subsequent developments—brutality and bribery are utilized to avoid any retribution for oppressive sexual misdeeds.

Even oppression of men seems largely related to this sexual oppression, focusing on their helplessness in the face of position and power—helpless to marry the women of their choice and helpless to defend them against the oppressors.

REVOLUTIONARY FIGURES

Three somewhat different, yet closely related, kinds of characters depicted may be viewed together as aspects of this general theme. First, there are those real or fictional individuals of Old China who are now presented as heroic precursors of Chinese Communism. Next are their counterparts in the transitional era of actual revolutionary struggle and gradual taking of power by the Communists. Finally, there are those who fill similar positions as heroes and models of behavior in the New China through roles and tasks related to the new situation.

Since many films depicting heroic precursors of the revolution are based on older historical or fictional characters or stories, in accordance with strong Chinese cultural tendencies to invoke the past to sanction the present, the nature of these characters and the stories may need some alteration or reinterpretation to fit in with Chinese Communism; an interesting study could be focused on this matter alone. Yet it should not be assumed that this restructuring is necessarily extreme or blatant. Such reinterpretation itself is also rather common traditionally, as fitting in with repeated turning to past models. Furthermore, character models from the past, like many aspects of traditional Chinese culture, tend to be ambiguous in depiction or multiple in number so that considerable interpretative leeway exists in their illustration of what behavior is heroic and good. Finally, in many respects there is sufficient similarity between some past and some present Chinese ideals so that only little reinterpretation is required.

This last point especially seems true for films portraying women warriors defending China against invaders (Hua Mu Lan, Women Generals of the Yang Family). Such stories are very old but perennially popular; the Communist version of the historical tale of Hua Mu Lan and a regular commercial version by Shaw Brothers Studios played in Hong Kong almost simultaneously. The two were quite similar in basic story, and it is no great reinterpretation to promote Hua Mu Lan or any similar woman fighter as not only a heroic defender of China but also as a forerunner of the present-day liberated woman, equal and similar to men.

In other films, women appear as pioneering spirits educationally or intellectually. This interpretation is easy to make for Chu Ying-tai, but a similar interpretation for Lin Tai-yu, the sickly and moody heroine of Dream of the Red Chamber, requires more stretching, resting on the basis of her poetry-writing, her skill at chess, and her support of Pao-yu's resistance to the classics, described as "the books of the 'sages' and the writings of the book-worms" (Chou, 1962).

For the same film, the stubborn or even provocative independence of Ching-Wen, a slave maid—and again an orphan—is interpreted as heroic resistance to the "slave mentality" and to oppression by the family (Wang, 1962). Indeed, in these depictions of early heroic women, the general emphasis is on resistance to domination by the Feudalistic Family, with struggles for more freedom of education, of occupation,

and especially of marital choice appearing as important specific aspects within this general category.

In this respect, the picture for men is much like that for the girls, both as to the aspects emphasized and the varying degree of strain in fitting old stories to the current interpretative framework. It is not so hard to view Liang Shan-po as a revolutionary spirit—though not a very powerful one—in the context of ancient China, since he does not go along with parentally arranged marriage and even wants to marry an educated girl. This is not so easy for Pao-yu in Dream of the Red Chamber. Even a pro-Communist author states that when he and his friends first read the novel as youths, "as for Chia Pao-yu, some of us also thought that he was 'unworthy,' 'indolent.' He loathes studies, spends whole days among the girls; it is romantic to be sure, it is poetic to be sure, but it seems hardly manful or heroic.... Of course, these opinions reflect that we were young and incapable of understanding the book fully" (Chou, 1962). But the correct understanding now is that "Pao-yu sympathizes with all those who are bullied; loathes the studies that lead to positions in the ruling class; and does not want to get mingled with the bureaucrats" (Yau, 1962). Again, in his relations with the actor Chi-kuan, now interpreted as representing the common people, "Pao-yu makes friendship with Chi-kuan merely because he sympathizes with the enslaved person, not in the dirty way (i.e., homosexually) imagined by Chia Cheng (Pao-yu's father)" (Wei, 1962).

For the sample of films studied, the transitional revolutionary period is shown mainly in Song of Youth. The principal revolutionary figure is the heroine, Lin Tao-ching; we see her progress from a helpless orphan on the point of suicide through a bad marriage with the somewhat personable but self-seeking youth who saved her life, to become first a brave and enthusiastic, but naive and reckless, supporter of student anti-Japanese and anti-Kuomintang movements, until finally she becomes a still spirited, but more disciplined and sensible, member of the Communist Party. Important secondary figures are also presented and shown as crucial in encouraging and guiding this development: Lu Chia-ch'uan and Lin Hung, as a youthful but somewhat older couple, members of the Party, who both are eventually executed, but who provide models of steadfast courage and devotion to the revolutionary cause to the end; and Chiang Hua, a young man with whom Lin Tao-ching increasingly joins in revolutionary work after she leaves her husband.

In Between Vengeance and Love, another film of the transitional period, a young man and a young woman, after various difficulties and misunderstandings between them, finally join in overthrowing her father, an evil landlord who has raped the hero's mother and then murdered both his mother and father. In accomplishing this man's downfall, they are aided by the boy's grandfather, the girl's mother, who has herself been mistreated badly, and by a group of oppressed local peasantry.

For the present era of New China (Singing Above the Reservoir, Cool Mountain's Bright Pearl, Blossoms in the Sun), the emphasis changes from working together to overcome evil people and an evil social system to working together in productive tasks of construction. There remains, however, an emphasis on young men and, especially, young women, of dedicated yet disciplined spirit and energy, and on wise, benevolent older leaders who provide them guidance and help in resolving interpersonal problems and, secondarily, technical ones.

ANTIINDIVIDUALISM

It is not necessary to study films from the People's Republic of China to find out that individualism is viewed by the Chinese Communists as a major evil, a great danger to the collective interest, and that anti-individualism correspondingly is a central theme of their political propaganda. This is apparent, for example, even in the special area of science:

> "In the Communist view, individualism is the besetting sin of all bourgeois intellectuals. Scientists are charged with bourgeois individualism when they pursue scientific study according to their personal plans instead of following state plans, when they prefer to work individually instead of collectively, when they are slow in accepting the guidance and leadership of the Communist Party, and when they seek personal or professional advancement instead of putting the interests of the proletarian cause above all else" (Chen, 1961, pp. 65-66).

But to know that a theme is important is not equivalent to knowing what it is all about and how it relates to other significant themes. Here again the rich depictions of themes in terms of human situations in films can be of great value in seeing more clearly what is meant by individualism on the one hand, and on the other what is being proposed as a positive alternative.

Individualism in its chief contemporary image, as a survival of selfish attitudes from the bourgeois society of the recent past, which must be guarded against and transformed, does not appear directly in the sample's films of the New China, which present ideal images of social cooperation. This may be due to the limited size of the sample, or the fact that the most recent such film dates only from 1961. It is evident from reviews in China's Screen that such individualism is a main theme in several recent productions, e.g., Never Forget, the story of a young workman who, under the influence of his mother-in-law, a former shopkeeper, neglects his factory job in trying to make money for himself by hunting wild ducks to sell. However, good material on similar individualism is presented in several of the sample's films made in Hong Kong and depicting life in the capitalist society there.

In Return of the Prodigal Youth, a young man leaves the widow of the shopkeeper to whom he was apprenticed, who has raised him, and her daughter, who loves him, and for reasons of personal ambition goes to work for a rich businessman and plays up to the boss's daughter. This causes grief all around; the girl casts him off, her father fires him, and meanwhile, because of his neglect, the mother and daughter also fall into trouble. When he repents and returns, however, the mother forgives him and brings him together with her daughter again. In The Precious Little Moon, the heroine, Yuen, a teen-age school girl, is an intelligent student, and a talented basketball player. But she is also ambitious, proud, and self-centered, unwilling to consider others. She meets and likes Hu, an altruistic young student who helps out as girls' basketball coach when the regular coach becomes ill, but they clash when he has to disagree politely with her about a situation in the game. Later he even has to take her out of the team's big game when she tries to star on her own and ignores teamwork. Things then get worse for her—she withdraws from her schoolmates, and her grades decline—but eventually, after she causes an explosion in the chemistry class by careless and headstrong behavior in which Hu is nearly blinded in shielding her, a woman teacher brings her to admit she has been wrong. She apologizes to Hu and at the end we see them, together but separately, proudly marching in the boys' and girls' groups on the school's athletic field. This resolution is particularly interesting because from their first meeting Yuen is pictured as evidently very interested personally in Hu, only to become even more individualistic from then on, and especially to resist any influence from him. Thus it seems quite plainly visible that much of the above-described development centers around the heroine's falling in love but resisting and denying this; but far from this being ever spoken of or acknowledged, the manifest interpretation, while in terms of social relationships, sees these entirely from the considerably different angle of individualism instead of focus on group membership.

There is similar material, though less extensively and plainly developed, in the transitional-period Song of Youth. The heroine marries a young man who saved her from attempted suicide, comforted her, and found her a job; he appears quite devoted and attentive to her. Perhaps this itself creates a problem; she is soon shown as turning away his advances, expressing dissatisfaction over having no significant work to do, and neglecting household duties. In the film this change is explained on the basis that she increasingly realizes he is only interested in private life and academic advancement, while she is patriotic and wants to be more active in national causes. This attitude is increased by her new friendship with a young Communist leader, who stimulates her intellectually. It seems clear that her husband views their relationship more personally, with jealousy and suspicion. Yet, although the husband may have been basically right in feeling, he was probably wrong in fact; later in the film she has left him, and is closely associated with another young Party member, but only to work closely with him. No intimate personal relationship is involved. Even when there is an apparently romantic scene of walking together and rowing on a lake among

willows, they talk only of political affairs, and he tells her she now seems ready to become a Communist, at which the scene shifts to one in which, though it resembles a wedding, she is pledging her oath to the Party.

Although the labeling is less explicit, it seems likely that in the films of Old China, individualism is one aspect of the self-centered (and sometimes family-centered) behavior of officials and landlords as they similarly grasp for position, power, money, and women, unscrupulously and with desregard for all others (The Jade Hairpin, Yang Nai-wu and Hsiao Pai-tsai, Dream of the Red Chamber, So Siu-siu, Between Vengeance and Love).

In contrast, when the women warriors of the Yang Family are accused, by a weak and cowardly imperial official, of going to battle for revenge and glory, they retort they are only serving the country—so many of them have died in the country's battles that if they cared about revenge they would always be fighting.

Also on the positive side of Antiindividualism—that is, cooperation for the benefit of others and the whole social group—in Song of Youth we see the young Communist leader and his wife, separately, continuing to teach, to help, and to set an example for their younger followers, even while in prison awaiting execution. They are captured, but they have "no right to give up" until their eyes shut in death. In Singing Above the Reservoir, the heroine invents a way to move earth more efficiently in building dams. First it is brought from her village to the big job near Peking and shown to her fiance. He uses it to win the day's competition between work teams, but then immediately teaches it to the leader of the other team. And in Blossoms in the Sun, which depicts a show given for "International Children's Night," there are many examples of helpful leadership by adults such as teachers, of acts that require close cooperation among the children performing, and of their cooperation in revising the program to cover the absence of its star, a boy who has turned aside on his way there to perform a higher duty in flagging down a train about to hit a truck stalled at a crossing.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

This theme often is not prominent, except in some of the New China films, yet it appears in one or another form in almost every film. In the films of Old China, Liang Shan-po and Chu Ying-tai especially portrays the restriction of education to men and its denial to girls under the old system, and this is also noted to some extent in Dream of the Red Chamber, which also, along with The Scholar and the Fairy Carp and So Siu-siu, points out that education is restricted to the wealthy, and that this classical education is impractical and useless except as a means to official position—so that the system is interlocking and self-perpetuating. In some contrast to all this are the pictures of

women warriors which show the practicality and value of military training, usually given a child by a parent (Hua Mu Lan, Women Generals of the Yang Family).

For present China the films present an image of a new concept of education, more technical and practical, adapted to social use, in building up resources of the nation. And not only may all learn—the poor, women, and members of the minorities (Cool Mountain's Bright Pearl)—but they may even invent new techniques and teach others (Singing Above the Reservoir). They learn, moreover, not only skills, but habits of cooperation (Blossoms in the Sun). The contrast of old and new is shown sharply in Song of Youth, where the individualistic husband wants to pursue his academic work quietly and help advance his own career through acquaintance with Hu Shih's secretary (Dr. Hu was then head of Peking University), whereas the heroine is reading Marxist works and joining student movements against the Japanese and the Kuomintang.

INVADERS

This theme, concerned with struggles against external invasion, appears in the sample in rather a reverse way from the Education and Training theme. When it appears at all, it is very prominent, usually the central theme of the film—as in Hua Mu Lan, Women Generals of the Yang Family, and, to a lesser degree, Song of Youth. But this theme seems to occur only in certain films (though their number is not small, and would be greater if the Hong Kong film censorship did not operate toward excluding such films with a modern rather than ancient setting) and not at all in many others—unless one sees a parallel between such invasion of the motherland and that personal emotional and bodily invasion that seems so often to threaten the heroines of these films when they are not great warriors (cf. Weakland, 1958).

In any event, it is striking how prominently and how directly women do figure in these films of Chinese fighting against invaders. From ancient China right up to the present, some women are portrayed, not only as activists and agitators, not only as strategists even, but as actual fighters. And as fighters they are not only equal to men, but often are shown as superior to and replacing them. The Yang Family women go off to war because the male head of their family, himself a famous general, has been killed fighting the barbarians. They are successful where he failed. Hua Mu Lan goes to war in place of her father because he, though a famous warrior, is growing old. To prove her ability, she has a trial at arms with him and defeats him. Then she goes off to the army, where her skill and even her strength are amply demonstrated. It is evident from the very lengths to which all this is carried that much of this theme is fantasy. But it is so pervasive a theme, having a long history in Chinese tales and drama, and appearing in non-Communist Hong Kong films (Shaw Brothers' Hua Mu Lan) and Taiwan films (Lady General Red Jade) as well as the Communist ones, that the significance of this fantasy must be considered seriously.

The invaders whom the Chinese women defeat–aided, of course, by men and sometimes youths–are often masculine almost to the point of caricature, big, burly, loud, and rough. At least this holds for the films showing old battles against the barbarians (in Chinese yeh man, "wild and rude"); material on images of the Japanese and other more recent enemies is too scanty for judgment.

Skill in the use of arms, developed by long training, is shown as important in defeating such formidable enemies; and discipline, courage, and group solidarity against the Japanese are emphasized in Song of Youth, but the dominant factor in victory is shown as strategy, an ability to outthink and outmaneuver the opponent. Hua Mu Lan diagnoses a coming night attack by seeing flocks of birds moving, and disposes troops to meet it; the old grandmother Yang, as commander and strategist, pretends to fall into a trap the barbarians prepare–and which had been fatal to General Yang himself–but meanwhile prepares a countertrap.

There are also significant indications, from Song of Youth and from film publications, that films depicting the periods of Manchu and Kuomintang rule over China might provide another half of this picture of relations with foreign enemies, by emphasizing the failure of bad Chinese leaders, through weakness, corruption, foreign influence, or lack of patriotism, to properly defend the country.

NATIONAL MINORITIES

Relations between the ethnic Chinese and internal minority groups form a theme of considerable importance–and one which appears to be increasingly frequent recently–according to explicit Chinese statement:

> "China is a multi-national country. In addition to the Han people, the majority nationality, it has more than fifty national minorities totalling close to forty million people. These fraternal peoples have different spoken and written languages, customs and habits, but they are all of them, brave, diligent, hard-working and united in their love of their mother country. In the dark days before liberation, they lived in misery, and their working people suffered not only from oppression by imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat and comprador capitalism, but also from national oppression by the reactionary rulers of the Han people. The founding of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949 delivered the minority peoples from that misery of exploitation and want. Under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and Chairman Mao, they have embarked on a new road of happiness and prosperity.

> "Over the past fifteen years of New China many works of socialist art and literature have portrayed the life and struggles of the working people of the national minorities. Film art is, of course, no exception. Since 1949, more than thirty feature films have been made about the minority peoples" (Lu, 1965).

Only one such film, Cool Mountain's Bright Pearl (also known as Te Chieh and Her Fathers), is included in the present sample, but a brief comparison of this film and the above characterization shows some interesting points, concerning both this theme and the value of film study generally.

The film contrasts the old and new days in the territory of the Yi tribe in West China. In the old days the local landlord had enslaved both tribal people and captives abducted from poor Chinese families. The present tribal leader, an ex-slave, is now shown welcoming a Chinese engineer, formerly only a poor stonecutter in that area, who has come with a crew to help the natives build a reservoir and teach them such work. These matters of productive work, teaching and learning, in which the natives, including both young men and women, participate fully just as in films of similar all-Chinese projects, portray a new relationship of Chinese-Yi equality—along with the usual benevolent guidance of the officials. However, one young girl working on the project, Te Chieh, is the foster-daughter of the tribal leader, who rescued her from slavery and threatened death at the hands of the landlord and his wife, and escaped himself in the process. And it turns out she is also the real daughter of the Chinese engineer. Long ago she was abducted by the landlord, who shot (but only wounded) her father. The film is largely concerned with the problem, "To which father shall she now belong?" (although she is 18 years old)—but not because they struggle over her. The two men are very friendly, in fact are now sworn brothers, and are antiindividualistic to such an extent that at first their growing knowledge of the truth is concealed from each other. Benevolent officialdom then characteristically takes a hand; the commune secretary acts as a go-between to announce the situation and get the two to discuss it. But "both of them yielded to the wishes of the other," or perhaps more realistically, each deferred politely and insistently in Alphonse and Gaston style, to the other's rights as he himself saw these, since neither ever defined his own claims and wishes. So matters were still at an impasse until "Finally, the higher administrative officers, after consideration, arranged their plan so that Te Chieh could stay together with her two fathers," and her real father moved in to live with his daughter and her foster-father. (Quotations given are from the program synopsis of this film.)

Even from this brief synopsis it is evident that while this film does not disagree with the points made in the general Communist characterization of films about minority peoples, it presents much more than this, and even more than the common images of cooperation which might by now be anticipated. In particular it is interesting how the question of Chinese-minority relationships is conceived and handled, or at least symbolized, largely in terms of family relationships. Not only is this quite overt for the "two fathers" situation, the early scenes which show the abducted girl with the landlord and his wife resemble, more covertly, many other depictions of orphans mistreated by foster parents.

RELATIVE SIGNIFICANCE AMONG POLITICAL THEMES

Although certain comments have been made in passing, the preceding discussion of political themes generally has not considered the relative significance of these themes. This is a complex question. Judgments of significance may either refer primarily to relative emphasis within the Chinese presentations as such, or be made in relation to special foci of interest held by the analyst (this factor is always involved at least in general and to some extent). Even to judge emphasis within this sample, as its films are presented to the viewer, which is the primary approach taken here, is not simple. A tabulation of the occurrence of the various political themes in the films of the sample is given in Table 2. However, when the films are closely examined, many of the themes tend to appear very frequently, since they are highly interrelated. Moreover, not only quantitative, but qualitative and structural considerations also are involved. The importance of any theme may be indicated by factors other than the gross frequency or duration of films or scenes in which the particular theme occurs—for example, the dramatic intensity of such scenes, or their structural significance to a total plot, as turning points or as framing the other action, may be equally relevant. At a still broader and deeper level, the ways in which these themes are interconnected, including the fact that some of them are at a higher level of generality than others, must be considered in estimating the significance of any one theme as a part of the larger whole.

With these points in mind, however, a rough judgment may be made, and the themes may be relisted in order of their estimated overall importance or emphasis as presented in the material of the film sample. At the same time, to promote a clearer view of the nature and interconnections of the various themes, they are re-presented in the form of a summary tabulation (Table 3). This tabulation is still closely related to the original list but involves some rearrangement and relabeling to produce a more logical, systematic, and general schema. Reactionary Figures and Revolutionary Figures have been

TABLE 2. MANIFEST POLITICAL THEMES

Film	Feudalistic Family	Liberation of Women	Liberation of Youth	Reactionary Figures	Revolutionary Figures	Anti-individualism	Education and Training	Invaders	National Minorities
Mainland China									
Old China									
Hua Mu Lan	-2	+1	.....	.....	+1	+2	+2	+1	.....
Women Generals of the Yang Family	.....	+1	+2	-2	+1	+2	+2	+1	.....
Liang Shan-po and Chu Ying-tai	-1	-1, +1	+2	.....	+1	-2	-1, +1	.....	.....
The Scholar and the Fairy Carp	-2	+2	-2, +2	-2	.....	+2	-2	.....	.....
Dream of the Red Chamber	-1	-1	-1	-2	+2	-2, +2	-2	.....	.....
The Jade Hairpin	-2	-2	-2	-2	.....	-1	-2	.....	.....
Yang Nai-wu and Ilsiao Pai-tsai	-2	-1	.....	-1	.....	-1	.....	.....	.....
New China									
Song of Youth	-2, +2	-1, +1	-2, +?	-1	+1	-2, +1	-2, +2	-2, +2	.....
Singing Above the Reservoir	+1	+1	+2	.....	+1	+1	+1	.....	.....
Cool Mountain's Bright Pearl	+2	-2, +1	+2	-2	+1	-2, +1	+2	.....	-1, +1
Blossoms in the Sun	+2	.....	+1	.....	+2	+1	+1	.....	.....
Hong Kong--Communist Influenced									
Old China									
So Siu-siu	-1	-1	-2	-1	+2	-1, +2	.....	.....	.....
New China									
The Perfect Match	-2	.....	.....	-2	.....	-1	.....	.....	.....
Return of the Prodigal Youth	.....	.....	-2	-2	.....	-1, +2	.....	.....	.....
As You Wish	-2	.....	-2	-1	.....	-1	.....	.....	.....
Precious Little Moon	.....	+2	+2	-2	+1	-1, +1	-2, +2	.....	.....
Between Vengeance and Love	-1	-2, +2	+2	-1	+1	-2, +2	.....	.....	.....

KEY: - Indicates negative or old society aspect of dualistic theme
+ Indicates positive or new society aspect of dualistic theme
1 Major occurrence of theme
2 Secondary occurrence of theme

TABLE 3. SUMMARY OF MANIFEST POLITICAL THEMES

General topic	Related manifest theme	Focus of content	
		Old China	New China
Individual and society	Antiindividualism	Selfish individualism	Concern for others and society
Family	Feudalistic Family	Old big family, oppressive and corrupt	New family—small, less involved, and less emphasis
Women	Liberation of Women	Oppressed and controlled, especially regarding sex and opportunities for education and work, often orphaned	"Liberated" from sexual pressures, to learn and work; related to purposeful social groups
Youth	Liberation of Youth	Similar to Liberation of Women but secondary and more general	
Power, influence, leadership	Reactionary Figures	Oppressive officials and landlords	
	Revolutionary Figures (People's Heroes)		Party and government officials; activists in revolution or construction
Education and training	Education and Training	Education restricted, impractical, except regarding position and power	Education widely available practical, and socially oriented
Relations with external enemies	Invaders	Patriotic resistance, especially by women	Communists lead resistance; anti-Communist weakness and "selling out"
Relations with internal minorities	National Minorities	Discrimination and oppression	Equality, benevolence; all one family

brought together under the broader heading of Leadership, Power, and Influence; this is logical and fits the actual film content, although the Chinese Communists naturally do not make explicit this connection between these opposed figures. Women and Youth are placed as subheads under The Family, since that is a chief locus of their appearance, although they also appear in close relation with depictions of leaders and the powerful.

The theme of Antiindividualism is placed first because it is nearly ubiquitous and often highly stressed in these films, and because it is of a high level of generality. It does not refer to some limited social segment or function, but to the broad problem of the relation of individual and group in all areas of social living. Its primacy perhaps is challenged by the Liberation of Women theme which, although it might seem more limited and special, occurs very often, and usually with great dramatic

emphasis and intensity. Rather than trying to decide this somewhat illusory issue of ranking directly, the significant problem will be treated by viewing these apparently so dissimilar themes together and exploring their interrelations.

This exploration will form one part of a broad further examination of the nature and political relevance of the Antiindividualism theme in the following pages. This examination, in concluding this report, will consider the current significance of this major film theme (and certain related matters) for Chinese political life, its relation to certain underlying cultural themes, and some connections of all this with traditional Chinese political and cultural problems and patterns.

THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THEMES: ANTIINDIVIDUALISM

Up to this point, the political themes in the films have been presented largely in their own terms, with primary attention to relatively manifest rather than covert material, and with little comment or explanation. This is a necessary beginning, and so long as it is realized that any political viewpoint involves a characteristic bias, which requires closer examination, the bias itself creates no serious problem. However, this relative isolation of political themes from their wider political and social context also potentially involves two more serious dangers to understanding, because the political importance and especially the realistic political relevance of such themes may be missed. At one extreme, some themes may seem unrelated to politics, and even as strange or trivial concerns. Or, on an opposite interpretation, for lack of visible relation to significant political and social problems, such themes may be seen as concerned solely with political manipulation, propaganda, and power.

Although some political themes in these films are indeed unusual to our own viewing of politics and although they do of course have an intended function of influence, both of the views mentioned are too extreme and overly simple. The situation can be clarified by looking at the theme of Antiindividualism in these respects in its own Chinese context, as a specific example which also serves to illuminate the problem more generally. This theme is especially adapted to this purpose because it is particularly important in the Chinese material and because it differs considerably from views on politics that we commonly entertain.

The emphasis on individualism and antiindividualism in these films expresses a Chinese Communist view that the relationship of individual and society—some wider group of individuals—is of central political concern. At its broadest and most fundamental level, this amounts to a concern with the nature and organization

of interpersonal relationships generally; this aspect will be considered later on. More specifically, this theme is focused on promoting cooperation among the individual members of social groups of various sizes and scope, ultimately on the national scale. This emphasis is not easy for Americans to grasp, for several reasons. We may acknowledge that the relationship of individual and society is important, but it seems more a matter of sociological theory than of practical politics. Cooperation, also, we may see as necessary and important to a degree, but hardly as a central national problem; except for certain critical situations, we rather take for granted that there will be sufficient cooperation between people for social groups to function adequately. Indeed, our overt emphasis in this regard is more likely to fall on the importance of competition between persons and between organizations. Thus, to the extent that our political thinking does focus on the area of the individual and society, of relations between persons and groups, we tend to honor an ideology that could be called individualistic, though, as will be more evident later, it differs significantly from what the Chinese imply by this term.

In addition, to a notable extent, Americans conceive of social problems much as we view problems generally, as practical, material difficulties which can be approached and resolved by mainly technical means. It is true that we may, rather invidiously and without very firm grounds, distinguish and except certain "political" problems from this viewing, but this main orientation remains, and it covers many problems which the film material and the Chinese Communists generally clearly view as lying within the political sphere.

Furthermore, we strongly tend to project such a view onto China (and other countries also), seeing their situation and problems largely in material and technical terms, whether these be older ones such as "the starving Chinese" amid flood and famine, or more modern and impersonal ideas of "underdevelopment." There is no question that these are real and important problems and that the Chinese Communists themselves are much concerned with them; otherwise they would not be making films depicting poverty and hunger in Old China and the building of reservoirs in New China. Yet, regardless of any preconceptions we may have about the materialism of Communism—and perhaps even in contradiction to conscious beliefs of the Chinese Communists, these films still do not depict practical material problems as the primary kind of problem to be resolved by political action, and particularly they do not depict technical means as the chief factor in solving national problems. The dominant point of view, which the films present clearly, centers on the basic importance of human attitudes and behavior, especially in the relations between individuals and groups. Poverty and hunger, as well as direct personal oppression, which is far more prominent, are seen as results of selfish individualism, and equally, on the other hand, social cooperation, in which the group interest is considered over the individual's private interest, is seen as leading almost automatically to the solution of whatever technical

and material difficulties that may exist. Singing Above the Reservoir tells what is really seen as primary, even in its title, and the film content confirms this; the emphasis, even for those who actively labor, is on cooperative social relationships—which then lead to productive accomplishment—while for their leaders there is still greater emphasis on dealing with interpersonal problems more than technical problems.

This central political concern for Antiindividualism with its active demands for cooperation and solidarity and its mistrust of self-oriented or self-directed behavior may seem strange to us, or as mere Communist suppression of the individual. Yet we can see that it makes a certain political sense given a society that, for whatever reason, has problems of cohesion and unity, and in China both such problems and this conception are old and familiar. Historically, it has often been remarked that despite its long cultural continuity, China has repeatedly alternated between national unity and fragmentation. Most of the past century has been a period of fragmentation; this has been noted, and calls for unity and solidarity have been issued by non-Communist as well as Communist Chinese leaders. Chiang Kai-shek himself is markedly concerned with the basic importance for China of unity (1947, pp. 119, 128, 140 ff.), but this note is sounded especially clearly by the father of the Chinese Revolution, Sun Yat-sen: "Foreign observers say that the Chinese are like a sheet of loose sand. Why? Simply because our people have shown loyalty to family and clan but not to the nation—there has been no nationalism" (Sun, 1927, p. 5). The remedy he proposes parallels the film material: "If we apply (liberty) to a person, we shall become a sheet of loose sand; on no account must we give more liberty to the individual; let us secure liberty instead for the nation. . . . To make the nation free, we must each sacrifice his personal freedom. Students who sacrifice their personal liberty will be able to work diligently. . . . When their studies are completed. . . then they can do things for the nation. Soldiers who sacrifice their personal liberty will be able to obey orders, repay their country with loyalty and help the nation to obtain liberty" (Sun, p. 213).

We may also note that a similar concern with the relationship of individual and society is found in neighboring Japan and use this to further clarify Antiindividualism by comparison. In a wartime study of propaganda in Japanese films, the dominant theme was seen to be Sacrifice:

> " There is an underlying unity manifested in all the films regardless of subject, time, or place. This underlying unity may be called the spirit of sacrifice or the subjection of self to pattern. The stoic virtues admired and inculcated in Japanese from childhood are celebrated: those of filial piety, fidelity, and patriotism. These traditional loyalties demand submission of the individual to his family, submission of a woman to her

> husband and his parents, and submission of a man to his country. The plots, in the final analysis, consist of the hero or heroine following the prescribed pattern of behavior or duty in spite of difficulties, temptations, or personal desires. Thus the conflict between good and evil is not a conflict between a protagonist and an antagonist but a conflict between a sense of duty on the one hand and whatever personal pleasures one is tempted with on the other. Most frequently this conflict is not overt but implicit. The Japanese hero is a man or woman who does not hesitate in his behavior because he is sure of the right thing to do. The play is thus most frequently the story of a life-time devotion to duty" (Office of Strategic Services, 1944, p. 3).

However, as is often true of Chinese and Japanese cultures, important similarities are here accompanied by important differences. For both Sacrifice and Antiindividualism, to be valued and approved behavior, should be focused outside and beyond the self. But for Japan there appears to be a variety of outer objects, involving defined loyalties and duties to persons of certain statuses, as well as to the nation. For Communist China, proper behavior is phrased more in terms of attitudes of cooperation and solidarity, with the content of these left somewhat ambiguous, perhaps to be further defined according to particular circumstances, and the object of such attitudes is consistently presented as a social group, often, though not exclusively, the whole nation, or to another person as a representative of the group—a member of the people. And especially the Japanese view emphasizes the pain and difficulty of following what is prescribed as correct; the Chinese view, while it may portray much trouble and effort involved in selfless cooperation and helping others, characterizes this not as sacrifice but often as joyful, and as satisfying fulfillment even when (as for the Communist leaders in Song of Youth) it leads to death.

The nature, prominence, and relevance to some important aspects of the Chinese national scene of the Antiindividualism theme are now plain enough, but the image should not be uncritically equated with reality. Even for nonpolitical entertainment films, and even in relation to themes which are not consciously promoted, there exists a complex variety of possible relations between film themes, psychological attitudes, and daily-life behavior (Wolfenstein, 1953a, p. 276 ff.). And in this case, the film depiction, especially for the joy of selfless effort, is not altogether convincing, although it is certainly being used deliberately by the Communist leaders of The People's Republic of China to promote active social effort and cooperation directed toward ends they desire.

Nevertheless, this also does not prove that even this eager, voluntary aspect of the Antiindividualism theme has no basis in Chinese

social realities and no appeal to the people, and should therefore be interpreted, and dismissed, as merely a device designed to get the people to work hard together at distasteful tasks imposed upon them by their rulers. The picture of joyful sweat and toil for the people rather easily seems unrealistic and hardly credible to us, yet it might look different to the Chinese themselves. In many societies people have held, and lived, suffered, and died for equally unrealistic beliefs. We need not even look to exotic or primitive cultures to find populations ready and even eager to accept "blood, sweat, and tears" in support of their country, and it is quite evident from interviews and discussions that many Chinese who are not sympathetic to Communism still take much pride in China's renewed national power and prestige. Nor should judgment in this matter be based on the common belief that Chinese are highly practical and realistic. They also have a capacity for fantasy and idealization to such a degree that common belief can be more real and convincing, both to themselves and others, than immediate observation and experience. As Levy has put this in connection with the study of Chinese social life, "So much more 'real' are the ideal patterns than the actual ones from the point of view of the Chinese themselves ... that extreme caution is required ... if one is to separate the idealizations from the empirically valid descriptions of Chinese society" (Levy, 1949, p. 46).

In this complex situation, it is helpful next to examine anti-individualism further at a different level, in the context of some related cultural themes.

POLITICAL THEMES AND CULTURAL THEMES: ANTIINDIVIDUALISM AND PERSONAL INTERACTION

To some extent, cultural themes have already appeared and have been mentioned in the foregoing material on political themes in two forms: (1) recurrent concrete images, such as the heroine as an orphan, or the arrangement of marriages by the Party if not by the parents; and (2) abstract premises, such as the view that life should be oriented toward a social system beyond oneself. Some additional themes are already visible—women repeatedly appear disguised as men; there are confusions of identity via dual roles or impersonations, especially in relation to marriage; communication is shown to be indirect and ambiguous. Still more cultural themes can be discerned in two ways: (1) Closer examination of less emphasized and covert aspects of the film material would undoubtedly turn up additional regularities; for example, there are certain scenes indicating that women are not merely oppressed but also are headstrong and provocative (As You Wish, So Siu-siu, Song of Youth, The Precious Little Moon, Between Vengeance and Love), and that where both men and women are involved in oppressing girls or youths, blame is maximized for the men, and minimized for the women (Dream of the Red Chamber, So Siu-siu). (2) There are certain contradictions among the political themes, involving either similar situations that are differently evaluated, as in

depictions of control of individuals by the powerful in Old China versus control by leaders of the New China; or opposing views of a single matter as in depictions of women as both weak and strong. Examination of such related but contrasting pictures often can lead to discerning more general premises underlying the contradictions, which makes the opposition more coherent by pointing to what they have in common or stating the context in which the strange becomes reasonable.

Here, however, it is not practical to pursue the discovery of all the cultural themes which might thus be found. Instead, although the above principles will be brought into play, since the focus of interest here is especially on cultural themes as related to political conceptions and behavior, we will center on further explication of the main political theme of Antiindividualism by examining it in relation to the other important political theme, Liberation of Women, and in relation to the progressively broader cultural themes concerning Chinese men—women relationships and style of interpersonal communication and interaction.

As mentioned briefly above, the Antiindividualism theme itself seems involved in contradictions. First, the Feudalistic Family, Reactionary Figures, Liberation of Women, and Liberation of Youth themes all stress how the old, wealthy, and powerful controlled the women, the young, the weak, and the common people in the old society, but decry this as taking away their individual personal freedom. Then both the Antiindividualism and Revolutionary Figures themes give considerable attention to the way Party cadres and government officials in the new society arrange the personal affairs of individuals, including education, career, and marriage, and value this positively; however benevolently depicted and positively labeled, this also is control of individual behavior from above.

Since sexual relationships and marriage figure so prominently in both sides of this picture, we may look next at Liberation of Women, where sex is so central in the picture of oppression. Here again there is a striking contradiction or incongruence: These films depict women as strong and powerful just as much as weak and helpless. This does not hold true only for films of New China, where it might perhaps be expected after their liberation. In the films of Old China such strong women also appear, often as the women warriors who take the major role in saving China from invaders, and in other instances as heroines who lead gallant struggles against the old systems of society. Whether strength or weakness predominates appears to depend on two interwoven sets of context factors. Women regularly appear as weak and oppressed in a family context (except for old women as matriarchs); in contrast to this, young women who join a voluntary, purposive group, whether this is a school, an ancient Chinese army, a local cooperative, or the Communist Party, are shown as strong and as receiving support from this group. The other context is closely related: Women are

shown as strong in war or other power struggles, but in personal and especially sexual encounters they are weak, disorganized, and helpless—although they may cause disruption and chaos by their disorderly behavior. For example, So Siu-Siu, herself a singing girl raised in a house of prostitution, though able to handle threats and pressures from an evil official by force of wit alone, collapses into ineffectiveness, blundering, and near-hysteria when he plainly states his eagerness to spend the night with her. Even in their positive relationships with the heroes, these Chinese heroines amply demonstrate their wit and skill competitively, at study or combat, but are hesitant, indirect, and restrained when it comes to intimate personal affection and love—although the heroes are likely to be even more so. Or perhaps more precisely, whenever one party, either man or woman, begins to make some positive move in this area, the other becomes confused and uneasy, and retreats by withdrawal (Dream of the Red Chamber), by misunderstanding (Liang Shan-po and Chu Ying-tai), or by hostility (Between Vengeance and Love, The Precious Little Moon, The Jade Hairpin). In the midst of depictions of how the Feudalistic Family oppresses the young, especially by making arranged marriages in opposition to the personal choices of young lovers, there recurrently appear scenes in which the pair have an opportunity to get together without parental supervision and control, but they typically make only minor indirect moves toward each other, and end by withdrawing; this is especially visible in the action of Dream of the Red Chamber, in spite of verbal material which serves to deny what is going on or explain it away. Generally, then, where a man and women are directly involved in a romantic or sexual relationship, emotional intimacy and commitment may be valued as ideals, but in practice they are avoided and feared as confusing, weakening, or dangerous. It should also be noted that such relationships between men and women not only hold in fantasy and film images, but in actuality. Many young Chinese students in American universities, who considered themselves too modern for family-arranged marriage have turned to friends to perform this same function rather than depending wholly on their own personal choices; similarly, even a middle-aged and highly successful widowed Chinese businessman, born and raised in the United States, was known to rely on friends in Hong Kong to seek and select a second wife for him.

Besides the love scenes described above, the films also show, more generally, various situations in which individual decision and action seem possible and is not controlled by others, yet still is avoided. A striking example occurs in Yang Nai-wu and Hsiao Pai-tsai. The heroine has been falsely accused of plotting her husband's murder, together with a male friend. She has been misled and intimidated by the real villains into making a false plea of guilty that also implicates her friend. They finally come before an honest judge, and judge and friend both urge her now to speak out truthfully, and against her oppressors. The situation is plain, but she will not tell her own story; the judge finally has to arrange a countertrick to get her to speak out privately to her friend while he hides to overhear her.

All of this material also is in line with a very general cultural theme of avoidance of direct and explicit communication, and preference for indirectness or ambiguity. This is an old theme in Chinese culture, and it is displayed frequently in the films, whether they are depicting Old or New China. Go-betweens appear very often; they may be, among others, maids and manservants, mothers, or Party cadres (Dream of the Red Chamber, Return of the Prodigal Son, Singing Above the Reservoir). In The Jade Hairpin, there is even a matchmaker as an evil, mischief-making go-between and a mother as a good go-between for a single relationship. Although go-betweens are especially evident in connection with communication in male–female relationships, they are not limited to this; for example, the commune secretary is go-between for the two fathers in Cool Mountain's Bright Pearl.

When face-to-face interaction does occur, communication on matters of importance is likely to be formal, or if more personal, to depend heavily on allusions. In one lengthy scene, famous for its use of allusion, Chu Ying-tai gives Liang Shan-po a multitude of hints that she, though in male attire, is a girl, and is interested in him—but he does not manage to understand until too late, after she has been betrothed to another. In Dream of the Red Chamber also there is much reliance on allusion, both in the film content, especially in the love relationship of Pao-yu and Lin Tai-yu, who communicate through poetry, presents, and music, and in the techniques of film portrayal. "I was so delighted in the scene in which Pao-yu listened to Tai-yu's playing of the seven-stringed instrument. The profound love of Pao-yu towards Tai-yu was well expressed; but the director adopted the approach of 'silent communion of two understanding hearts.' There is no dialogue; but the audience is allowed to feel that profound love in that silent scene" (Wei, 1962). Yet even some Chinese viewers consider that "the meeting of two understanding souls is quite ambiguous" (Chou, 1962). "This Dream of the Red Chamber, as a whole, depicts the emotions in a refined way; the detailed depiction is like a running stream under a small bridge with its whispers and murmurs" (Pu, 1962). Indeed, the presentation is beautiful and poetic. So is the indirect and ambiguous communication between the lovers; but while it may arouse tender passions in each, it fails to deal with their differences and bring them together.

Bringing this whole complex set of elements into focus, we can now see how they fit together to form a broad cultural pattern underlying the Antiindividualism theme and serving to make its incongruencies more coherent. First, to base behavior and social relationships (including communication and recognition of emotions as well as overt actions) directly on personal feeling and personal responsibility, to the limited extent this is even conceived as a possibility, is generally mistrusted and avoided. This holds especially for individuals in close one-to-one relationships with other persons. Such behavioral orientation, however, should be clearly distinguished from and contrasted with the individualism overtly attacked in the films. This

refers to behavior that is oriented to personal gain in a narrow and immediate sense, but is really personally and socially irresponsible, detached, and destructive of personal relationships. In the films positive emphasis and valuation is put on neither of these, but on a third alternative, behavior oriented and ordered according to formal, established, impersonal rules of conduct related to one's social position and current situation, with more particular behavioral guidance from authority figures. Of course, if the rules and authorities are seen as bad, as for Old China, this system of ordering behavior will seem very oppressive to many, just as the Feudalistic Family and Reactionary Figures themes depict. But if the rules and authorities are seen as good and benevolent, then individual goodness and smooth social interaction both relate to personally doing actively and well what is thus prescribed.

Here also is a significant basis for Chinese commitment to Anti-individualism, and one which is especially strong in the context of the overall pattern: Personally based behavior appears dangerously involving and uncertain in outcome; individualistic behavior is perhaps tempting, but bad, and involves some degree of personal isolation. But, given good rules and authorities, socially ordered behavior minimizes these temptations and dangers, protects against both too great intimacy and too little interaction, and firmly promises favorable outcomes for both individual and society.

A final comment is needed to make three important points as plain as possible: (1) The political theme of Antiindividualism, whatever its propagandistic use, seems from this examination also to be deeply rooted in real problems of social interaction that inhere in Chinese cultural organization, and to be an attempt to deal effectively with these problems. Although the other political themes have not been so extensively examined, it seems probable on the present evidence that the same is true for them also. For example, Liberation of Women, although it is used politically to promote more productive labor by women, is also clearly visible as an attempt to resolve problems inherent in cultural mistrust of emotional and sexual intimacy. (2) Firm promises of favorable outcomes from the behavior prescribed in these themes, even if sincerely believed both by Chinese Communist leaders and followers, do not ensure that the outcomes envisioned will really ensue. There may be neglected factors, mistaken assumptions, or conflicts between different themes or premises. For instance, it was noted earlier that the view of individualism in these films avoids noticing the evident significance of emotional relationships in such behavior. And women are to be liberated, apparently, without considering that they are already strong in many respects and that, according to much evidence, Chinese men traditionally feared their influence. Unanticipated consequences from such moves may be great. (3) Nevertheless, if people do believe and endeavor to act in accordance with the messages of these films, this is very important. In the first place, the very existence of common belief and action is of great

social significance, especially in comparison to apathy and disunity. In the second place, such belief and action may be sufficient to overcome, counteract, or deny the existence of flaws and departures from promised ideal outcomes to a large degree for a long time. After all, societies do continue to function on the basis of various kinds and degrees of common belief, although probably no culture exists whose claims and expectations about the social outcome of approved behavior are thoroughly accurate.

CURRENT THEMES AND OLD THEMES: PERSISTENCE AND CHANGE

In attempting to understand the significance of the political themes in these films, along with their nature, it is important finally to note that, despite its current prominence and political relevance, the theme of Antiindividualism, as described above, and the general pattern to which it has been related are not new in China, not just importations or inventions of the Chinese Communists. We may again recall how similar was the note Sun Yat-sen sounded 40 years ago: "On no account must we give more liberty to the individual; let us secure liberty instead for the nation ... .To make the nation free, each must sacrifice his personal freedom" (1927, p. 5). And this view was not new then. In fact, more than 2,000 years ago Confucius was describing the nature and virtues of an ordered social system in which proper behavior was defined in advance, so that if each kind of person carried out his own role, the good of the whole would be served and society would function smoothly and effectively, though his terminology, and doubtless much of the specific role content, was different: "There is government, when the prince is prince, and the minister is minister; when the father is father, and the son is son" (Confucius, no date, p. 165).

As for the basic patterns of indirect communication and interaction which we have seen as so highly related to this central theme, the Chinese language itself is oriented toward flexible ambiguity rather than precise specification, and formality, allusion, and the use of go-betweens are all very old characteristics of Chinese culture. As one instance, far from the oldest, these all are prominent in the original novel of Dream of the Red Chamber, written 200 years ago, in forms very like their appearance in the Communist film version of this story.

In this same book, caution and withdrawal can be seen as characterizing the love relationship of Pao-yu and Lin Tai-yu, behind the screen of description of this relationship as a delicate, poetic meeting of hearts. The same holds true in the story of Liang Shan-po and Chu Ying-tai, based on a folk legend from the fourth century. Both of these old sources also point out strains in the relations between parents and

young women and men in the traditional extended family, though of course without the feudalistic label. Indeed, probably most of the points made about Old China in the political themes of the films were made long ago, in works that were widely known, though they were seldom officially approved: Classical education and officialdom were mocked in the 18th-century work The Scholars (Wu, 1964) as well as questioned in Dream of the Red Chamber; Hua Mu Lan and other women warriors were depicted repelling invaders in tales and operas long before movies existed.

Corresponding older parallels for the thematic elements relating to New China, it is true, are less clear and numerous, and certainly less close and specific. Still, in addition to the early appearance of Antiindividualism, some old and popular works such as Shui Hu Chuan (Buck, 1933) do portray revolutionary groups as heroic, and we have seen that other figures from the past can be cast as revolutionists with the aid of only moderate reinterpretation.

What then is really new in the Communist Chinese themes? And how can so much be a matter of old themes and patterns, especially when almost the only thing Americans, non-Communist Chinese, and the Chinese Communists agree on is that Mainland China today is quite different from traditional China? Such questions can hardly be given comprehensive and specific answers here; the problem is too big to fit within the scope of this work. Even at a purely technical level, its exploration would require extensive and difficult comparisons of both differences and similarities, and ideally of two kinds: between Communist China and traditional China, and between Communist China and other Chinese communities currently—comparison of Chinese Communist, Taiwan, and Hong Kong films could contribute here.

Yet certain basic aspects of this matter must be considered at least enough to prevent the making of hasty and oversimplified generalizations about cultural changes or persistence in Communist China on the basis of what has been noted about the films. The most important thing to recognize is that the problem in any such evaluation really does not lie at the technical level, but concerns the whole question of what constitutes significant social change; this question as yet is little explored and little understood. Some of the major complexities and problems it necessarily involves may, however, be pointed out: (1) In the first place it depends on the evaluative point of view. (For this reason, a general appraisal concerned with basic cultural patterns need not agree even with an American and Chinese consensus, since this can easily be more concerned with immediate practicalities.) A coup d'etat which merely replaces one set of leaders in a society with another set holding quite similar views may be significant in many practical respects, with no change whatever in cultural patterns or even much in political policies and organization. (2) At deeper levels are changes observed in a society, changes of social and cultural ends, or of means—and it is by no means easy to judge which are more fundamental. (3) There may be changes in the specific

content of cultural themes or patterns while their general form remains the same—this certainly applies to many of the changes in Communist China. (4) Is an apparent change permanent, or a phase of a cycle including both the old and new social phenomena? This again is important to consider for China, in view of previous alternations between strong central government and fragmentation of the nation. (5) And, finally, it is essential to ask, for even striking changes, whether what is observed as new represents any fundamental reorganization of cultural patterns, or a change of emphasis among aspects of the preexisting pattern, such as a reversal between minor and major, or covert and overt themes. This question, too, is particularly important in the case of China, because Chinese culture traditionally has laid great stress at many levels, on presenting an ideal image to the world, and consequently the existence of many covert realities has usually been overlooked to such a degree that on coming into plain view such old realities—e.g., family conflict and hostilities—tend to be seen as "un-Chinese."

Viewing the data of this study generally in connection with the foregoing considerations, some comments may be made concerning Communist China in relation to traditional Chinese culture. These comments, in accordance with the circular model characterizing scientific investigation, essentially are hypotheses built up from the data, which are important as a general context for the interpretation of further data, film or other, but which also are subject to modification or correction by such data.

First, although there are certainly many specific differences between China today and China formerly, on the basis of the themes and patterns exhibited in these films and related evidence, the persistence and strength of basic traditional themes and cultural patterns is striking. In fact, these are so prominent as to suggest that Chinese Communism involves more a nativistic movement of cultural revitalization, as this has been considered in anthropological studies (cf. Mooney, 1965, esp. pp. ix-x), than a new system derived from within or without. Such a cultural revival or revitalization may indeed involve borrowings from outside, but only for grafting onto the fundamental native base. In the case of Communist China, there has, of course, been importation of materials and techniques, and, with important Chinese modifications and interpretations, of Communist ideology; but the continuation and renewed emphasis of Chinese patterns of social interaction, conceptions, and attitudes appears much more fundamental.

Second, the relationship of change and persistence may be examined for one specific and crucial area that has involved much more controversy, namely, the relationship of the family and the government. Much of the film material supports the view that great efforts are being made to shift the central focus of social organization from the family (although this is hardly being abolished) to the state, the national government, and its local organs. This is perhaps the greatest change in the People's Republic of China. Yet it also represents a great continuity, since the basic premises and aims of the state, including the

patterns of interaction prescribed, are formally very like those promoted before by the family. Once again, this is similar to developments envisioned but not achieved by Sun Yat-sen: "China has had exceedingly compact family and clan groups and the family and clan sentiment of the Chinese is very deep-rooted .... If this worthy clan sentiment could be expanded, we might develop nationalism out of clanism" (1927, p. 113).

It is difficult to say what other changes such a shift in level of central organization would necessarily entail; it would be easier if we had good information on whether any similar shift occurred in past Chinese periods of strong central government. In any event, it seems that the Chinese Communists, probably without realizing it fully, are taking more seriously than ever before the old Chinese view that "The country is like a big family." The eventual results of their insistence on cultural reorganization in these terms is not yet clear, but to interpret accurately, follow developments realistically, predict reliably, and influence wisely, we must recognize the essential nature of what they are doing—even if they themselves fail to do so.

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13. ABSTRACT

This is a Project Michelson study report. The author analyzes 17 Chinese Communist dramatic films and compares them with traditional Chinese literature and drama and with Chinese films produced in Taiwan and Hong Kong. The dominant themes discussed are

1. The Feudalistic Family
2. Liberation of Women
3. Liberation of Youth
4. Reactionary Figures
5. Revolutionary Figures
6. Antiindividualism
7. Education and Training
8. Invaders
9. National Minorities

Emphasis on these themes is shown to be related to problems of social conflict, communication, and authority within the Chinese culture.

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